NATION

India test-fires Agni missile with 2,500km range from train

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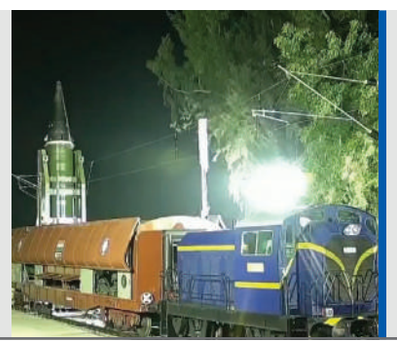

BUSINESS

Nifty slips below 25K as 'H1B fear bear' grips mkts

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

West Indies series: Ravindra Jadeja named India vice-captain

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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PM hails Russia ties as 'Make in India' marks 11 yrs

GREATER NOIDA, 25 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday marked 11 years of the Make in India initiative, praising its impact on the nation's economic growth and entrepreneurial spirit. His remarks came against the backdrop of strained ties with the US, after it imposed up to 50 per cent tariffs on Indian imports while questioning New Delhi's Russian oil purchases. Speaking at the UP International Trade Show, where Russia was the partner country, he underlined India's 'time-tested' defence cooperation with Moscow and announced local production of AK-203 rifles and BrahMos missiles. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

Wankhede sues SRK over 'The Ba***ds of Bollywood'

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

IRS officer and former NCB zonal director Sameer Wankhede on Thursday filed a defamation suit in the Delhi High Court against actor Shahrukh Khan and Gauri Khan owned Red Chillies Entertainment and Netflix for allegedly maligning his reputation in their series 'The Ba***ds of Bollywood'. Wankhade's plea has sought permanent and mandatory injunction, declaration and damages against the Red Chillies Entertainment Private Limited, Netflix and others, for what he alleges is "false, malicious and defamatory video" of the production house and broadcast by Netflix as part of their television series. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

PM to transfer Rs 10,000 to 75L Bihar women

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch Bihar's Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana on Friday, transferring Rs 10,000 each to 75 lakh women across the state, totalling Rs 7,500 crore. The scheme aims to make women self-reliant and promote empowerment through self-employment and livelihood opportunities. One woman from each family will receive the initial grant, with potential additional support of up to Rs 2 lakh in later phases. Community-driven training will be provided through self-help groups, while rural markets, or "gramin haat", will be developed to support the sale of produce. *—PTI*

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It is voluntary: K'taka HC refuses to stay caste survey

Says data must remain confidential & people must not be forced

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

Karnataka High Court on Thursday allowed the State's ongoing socio-economic and educational survey, widely referred to as the caste survey, to continue but made it clear that participation must be voluntary and all collected data kept strictly confidential.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Joshi directed the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes to issue a public notification stating clearly that no person is obligated to disclose any information, and that participation in the survey is entirely voluntary.

"We do not find reason to interdict the ongoing survey," the bench noted. "However, data collected shall not be disclosed to any person. The Commission shall ensure that it is fully protected and kept confidential."

The court further directed that enumerators must inform respondents of their right to opt out and must not persuade or pressure those unwilling to participate. The Commission was also instructed to file an affidavit within one working day detailing the steps taken to protect and store the data securely.

The order comes amid growing political and legal scrutiny of the caste survey. Petitioners had sought to halt the process, citing concerns over data privacy and political misuse.

Defending the survey, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for the state government, said the Centre was taking contradictory positions. He pointed out that the Union government had passed the 105th Constitutional Amendment in 2021, restoring powers to states to identify backward classes.

"Having piloted this amendment, the Centre now conveniently supports the petitioners simply because a different political party is in power in the state," Singhvi told the court, calling the opposition to the survey politically motivated. *—PTI*

The court further directed that enumerators must inform respondents of their right to opt out *PHOTO: PTI*

Govt to punish officials not attending survey

The Karnataka government on Thursday said disciplinary action will be taken against government officials and staff who are not conducting the Social and Educational Survey, popularly known as "caste census" assigned to them. Amid concerns about the slow pace of the survey, with technical glitches and server issues affecting the data gathering, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil said as per information, things had improved on Thursday. *—PTI*

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FOREIGN FUNDING ALLEGED

Curfew in Ladakh; Wangchuk's FCRA licence cancelled

LEH/NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

At least 50 people were detained as police and paramilitary forces strictly enforced a curfew in violence-hit Leh on Thursday, a day after large-scale clashes over Ladakh's statehood demands left four people dead and more than 80 injured.

The unrest, the region's worst since 1989, saw mobs torch vehicles, vandalise property, and target the BJP office and Hill Council premises. Tear gas was used to disperse crowds, and security presence was heightened across the district.

In a parallel development, the Centre cancelled the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act registration of SECMOL (Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh), a nonprofit founded by renowned Ladakhi activist Sonam Wangchuk.

The action of the ministry was based on several alleged discrepancies detected in the accounts of the organisation including a fund transfer from Sweden which the ministry found was against "national interest".

The move came just a day after the protests and the Centre blamed Wangchuck for inciting violence. Wangchuk, who has been peacefully campaigning for statehood and constitutional safeguards under the Sixth Schedule, alleged the action was an attempt to silence him. "I'm being made a scapegoat," he said.

The CBI has also launched an investigation into alleged FCRA violations by another Wangchuk-founded institution, the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives Ladakh (HIAL). Officials said the agency is examining foreign contributions between 2022–24, but Wangchuk claims the scope has expanded without justification. He insists the funds in question were payments for exporting knowledge to global institutions like the UN and European universities.

Wangchuk also pointed to a string of actions against him, including sedition charges, lease cancellation for HIAL land, income tax notices, and the revival of a four-year-old labour complaint , calling them an effort to suppress dissent. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 5

> **To say it was instigated by me, or sometimes by Congress, is to find a scapegoat, rather than addressing the core of the problem, and this will lead us nowhere. I see they are building up a case to bring me under the Public Safety Act and throw me in jail for two years**
>
> -Sonam Wangchuck

IAF, HAL sign Rs 62K cr deal for 97 Tejas jets

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The defence ministry has signed a Rs 62,370 crore contract with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) on Thursday to procure 97 Tejas MK-1A light combat aircraft for the Indian Air Force.

The agreement, finalised a month after the Cabinet Committee on Security approved the deal, includes 68 single-seat and 29 twin-seat jets. Deliveries are expected to begin in 2027-28 and continue over a six-year period.

The aircraft will feature over 64 per cent indigenous content, with advanced systems such as the Uttam AESA radar, Swayam Raksha Kavach, and control surface actuators integrated into the design. The procurement will generate nearly 11,750 direct and indirect jobs annually and support more than 100 Indian vendors, boosting the domestic aerospace and defence ecosystem. The single-engine Mk-1A, the most advanced variant of India's indigenous fighter aircraft, will replace the retiring MiG-21 fleet. It is designed to strengthen the IAF's operational capabilities across air defence. *—PTI*

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WORDS NOW SILENT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah paid his last respects to renowned Kannada novelist SL Bhyrappa, who died due to cardiac arrest, at Ravindra Kalakshetra in Bengaluru on Thursday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

VIOLENCE NEAR GARG'S MANAGER'S HOME

GUWAHATI, 25 SEPT

A group of people, which had gathered outside the residence of singer Zubeen Garg's manager, hurled stones at police vehicles following which the security personnel batoncharged them on Thursday.

The cops were escorting an SIT team to the manager Siddhartha Sharma's house .

The angry protesters were demanding his immediate arrest for being allegedly responsible for the singer's death. They also tried to break open the main entrance gate to the apartment block premises but a heavy deployment of police force prevented them.

When the SIT team left the compound, the protesters hurled stones at the vehicles and prevented them from leaving and some attacked the police personnel on duty at the gate. The police have detained two persons from the crowd for allegedly provoking the crowd gathered to create disturbances in the area, an official said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

'I love Mohammed' poster sparks tension in Davangere

DAVANGERE, 25 SEPT

Communal tensions flared up after posters with messages 'I love Mohammed' cropped up in the district headquarter town of Davangere on 24 September night, leading to stone pelting between two groups of people, police sources said.

The incident at Karl Marx nagar led to a stand-off between members of two communities over the removal of the posters.

According to Davangere Superintendent of Police Uma Prashnath, police reached the spot immediately and brought the situation under control within five minutes.

"A banner written 'I love Muhammadiya' was put up in Karl Marx Nagar. Another community demanded that it be removed. People had gathered from both sides, but the police immediately went to the spot and dispersed everyone. Now the situation is completely peaceful," she told reporters. Prashanth said the banners have also been removed now. The 'I Love Muhammad' controversy, began in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, has sparked protests across Uttarakhand, Telangana, and Maharashtra. The controversy began on 4 September during the Barawafat-Milad-un-Nabi) procession in Kanpur. A group put up an 'I Love Muhammad' banner along the procession route. This led to objections from groups of other communities. *—PTI*

SC STAYS HC BAN ON 'RAMLEELA' IN UP SCHOOL

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the Allahabad High Court order that prohibited Ramleela festivities at a school ground in Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan, and N Kotiswar Singh permitted the century-old tradition to proceed, subject to the condition that no inconvenience is caused to students.

While acknowledging their disapproval of religious events on school grounds, the justices noted the Ramleela had already been underway since 14 September. They issued a notice to the Uttar Pradesh government, directing the Allahabad High Court to work with the district administration to find an alternative location for future events. The court also instructed the High Court to hear from the organisers and other parties about proposing a new venue.

The Court also expressed disapproval toward the petitioner, Pradeep Singh Rana, for waiting until the event had started to file his plea. The bench questioned, "This Ramleela has been going on for 100 years, and you also accept this fact. Then what prevented you from moving the courts in advance and stopping the festivities? *—PTI*

US sanctions two Indians for supplying fentanyl

WASHINGTON, 25 SEPT

The US Treasury has sanctioned two Indian nationals and an India-based online pharmacy for distributing counterfeit prescription pills containing fentanyl and other illicit drugs across the United States.

Sadiq Abbas Habib Sayyed and Khizar Mohammad Iqbal Shaikh were sanctioned for their role in supplying hundreds of thousands of fake pills laced with fentanyl, a fentanyl analogue, and methamphetamine, according to the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

The two allegedly worked with narcotics traffickers in the Dominican Republic and the US to market the counterfeit drugs as discounted pharmaceuticals. They used encrypted messaging platforms to operate and target victims.

Khizar Shaikh also owns KS International Traders (KS Pharmacy), which was sanctioned for facilitating the illicit trade. Under the sanctions, all property and interests of Sayyed and Shaikh located in the US or controlled by US persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. Fentanyl remains a major driver of the US opioid crisis. *—PTI*

THE ORR STANDSTILL

Wipro will not open campus to ease traffic

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

Wipro founder and chairman Azim Premji has declined a request from State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to open the company's Bengaluru campus for public vehicular movement.

The Chief Minister, in a letter to Premji on 19 September, had suggested that allowing limited traffic through the Sarjapur campus could reduce congestion on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) by up to 30 per cent.

In his reply, Premji stated that opening the private property, which is a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), would pose significant legal and governance challenges for a listed company. He emphasised that the campus's contractual obligations to global clients require strict access control, which would be compromised by public thoroughfare. While acknowledging the severity of Bengaluru's traffic issues, particularly on the ORR, Premji argued that this proposal is not a sustainable, long-term solution. He suggested a more comprehensive, scientific study on urban transport management is needed to develop a holistic roadmap of effective solutions. To demonstrate Wipro's commitment, he offered to underwrite a significant portion of the cost for such an expert study. The issue of traffic congestion has been a major concern for the city's tech companies and commuters, with the ORR being a key example of the problem. Premji's response highlighted the complexity of the issue, suggesting that a collaborative, data-driven approach is essential for change. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

GBA launches app marking corpn boundaries

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

Greater Bengaluru Authority and five City Corporations launched "Bengaluru City Dishaank." It's a GIS mobile application giving information on City corporations, zones, wards, assembly constituencies. More information will be soon added. It is available on Play Store and Apple App Store. —*Salar News*

Gadag cop dies as jeep plunges into ditch

GADAG, 25 SEPT

A police officer was killed in a vehicle accident in Gadag district of the State on Tuesday. ASI Kashimsab was one of three personnel injured when their jeep plunged into a ditch after colliding with a donkey near Soratur village. The officers were returning from the Ganesha idol immersion procession in Lakshmeshwar. Kashimsab succumbed to his injuries on Thursday morning at a private hospital in Hubballi. Inspector Umeshgouda Patil and driver Omnath remain in serious but stable condition. Gadag Superintendent of Police Rohan Jagadish said, "Compensation according to department norms will be given early to his kins and also a job for a member of his family." Kashimsab had only five months left until retirement. —*Salar News*

Staffers skipping caste survey will be disciplined

Govt says action will be taken against lax officials in the GBA region and soon in other districts

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

The State government on Thursday said disciplinary action will be taken against government officials and staff who are not conducting the Social and Educational Survey, popularly known as "caste census" assigned to them.

Amid concerns about the slow pace of the survey, with technical glitches and server issues affecting the data gathering, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said things had improved on Thursday.

"It has been decided to take disciplinary action against the government officials and staff who have been deputed for the Social and Educational Survey that is underway, if they are not performing or attending their duty, as per the order. The authority to take action in the Greater Bengaluru Authority area has been given to the GBA Commissioner," Patil told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

Asked about other districts, he said, "the orders will percolate to districts as well. The Chief Minister is holding a meeting with Deputy Commissioners of all districts and CEO of all Zilla Panchayats tomorrow (26 Sept)... and he will give the necessary directions at the meeting."

According to officials, the survey had been delayed in the Greater Bengaluru area, on the request of the authorities, for training and necessary preparations.

The survey will see as many as 1.75 lakh enumerators, covering approximately 2 crore households PHOTO: PTI

KJ GEORGE GETS CLEAN CHIT

The Cabinet has partially accepted the inquiry report of a commission headed by KN Keshavanarayan, a retired judge of the Karnataka High Court, giving a clean chit to Minister KJ George and two IPS officers, and rejected the recommendations for a departmental inquiry against the officers, in connection with case pertaining to alleged suicide of Deputy Superintendent of Police MK Ganapathy in July 2016. The Cabinet accepted that the then Home Minister George (now power Minister) and the two IPS officers were not responsible for his death, as alleged in the note. —*PTI*

WHAT CABINET APPROVED

- Karnataka State Civil Services (Compulsory Training for Promotion) Rules 2025.
- Sri Malai ahadeshwaraswamy Kshetra Development Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2025.
- Karnataka State Skill Development Policy-2025-32.
- Karnataka Rent (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

WHAT BENGALURU GOT

- Occupancy certificate is no longer required for 1,200 sqft and above residential buildings in GBA jurisdiction.
- 110 junctions will get traffic signals for Rs. 56.45 crore..
- BWSSB gets 5-year contract to maintain the Bellandur Wastewater Treatment Plant at Rs. 23.36 crore.
- Rs 128.74 crore for revised DPR 2nd phase of sewerage system to Channapatna.

INFRA AND DEVELOPMENT

- Rs 329.00 cr for expansion of State Fire and Emergency Services Department.
- Rs 40.29 cr for development and implementation of Integrated University and College Management Software Version 2.
- Rs 16 cr to build Taluk Praja Soudha building in Kadur

HEALTH CARE

- Rs 95.60 cr to upgrade the 60-bed hospital in Virajpet, Kodagu, to 250 beds.
- Rs 23.75 cr to shift 50-bed Intensive Care Unit, originally meant to come up at Chikkodi in Belagavi, to Bailhongal Taluk Hospital.

Considering complete stay on bike taxi ban: HC raps State

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday questioned whether the State's new law for gig workers covers bike taxi services and indicated that it may consider staying the ongoing ban on such operations if rules are not framed soon.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Joshi was hearing appeals filed by Ola (ANI Technologies), Uber, Rapido, individual riders, and the Bike Taxi Welfare Association against a single judge's order halting bike taxi services until the State introduced specific regulations.

Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty informed the bench that the interests of the bike riders would be covered under the Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025, which came into effect on 12 Sept. The law extends social security benefits to delivery workers and those engaged with ride-sharing platforms, Shetty submitted.

The judges, however, asked whether the legislation explicitly addressed the concerns of two-wheeler taxi riders.

"One month was given to frame a policy, but nothing was done," the Chief Justice said, while observing that the court was "inclined to grant a full stay." The bench directed the State not to take coercive action against individual riders until the matter is heard on 15 Oct. —*PTI*

FINAL GOODBYE TO BHYRAPPA

People flock to pay their last respect to Kannada novelist SL Byrappa, who died due to cardiac arrest, at Ravindra Kalashetra premises in Bengaluru on Thursday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

K'taka hotels: Can't cut prices because of rent, LPG taxes

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

The Karnataka State Hotels Association has expressed its inability to pass on the GST rate cut benefits to consumers as the taxes on LPG cylinders and property rents have not been reduced.

The Association has urged the government to provide relief by reducing the GST on property rent and help hotels survive in the competitive market.

This comes after the GST Council, comprising the Centre and states, decided to reduce tax rates on about 375 goods and services, from 22 September – the first day of Navaratri.

"People are asking us as to when hotel food and room tariffs will be reduced. But we, the hoteliers, are constrained to reduce the price at this juncture unless we get some relief from the government," association President GK Shetty said, welcoming the Centre's decision.

Shetty pointed out that vegetables, meat and some more items are under 0 per cent GST from the beginning, but the 18 per cent GST on cooking gas cylinders has remained untouched.

"In addition, hoteliers who run their business from rented buildings are paying 18 GST on the rent they pay," he said.

"If the GST is reduced to five per cent on rent, then we can pass on the benefits to our consumers. With the present GST rate, it is not possible for us to offer any relief to consumers," he underlined. —*PTI*

Want to build a memorial for Bhyrappa in Mysuru: CM

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said the State government will take measures to build a memorial for popular Kannada novelist and philosopher SL Bhyrappa in Mysuru. Bhyrappa died due to cardiac arrest at a private hospital on Wednesday. He was 94.

"Let's build a memorial, I feel it will be better if it is at Mysuru. Our government will take measures to build a memorial in Mysuru, because he spent most of his life in Mysuru, his education and most of his professional and literary life was in Mysuru," Siddaramaiah told press.

The Chief Minister, who paid his last respects to the mortal remains of Bhyrappa, noted that the writer was a recipient of Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Saraswati Samman, Sahitya Akademi awards, among other honours. Siddaramaiah felt that Bhyrappa should have got the "Jnanpith" award, the highest Indian literary award.

Bhyrappa's mortal remains were kept at Ravindra Kalakshetra in City for people to pay their last respects on Thursday. His cremation will be held on Friday after 8.30am at the Rudrabhoomi located at the foothills of Chamundi Hills. The State government decided to perform his last rites with full state honours.

Bhyrappa had written about 25 novels which had been translated into 40 languages.

Bhyrappa is known for his popular novels 'Vamshavriksha', 'Daatu', and 'Parva'. His works like 'Naayi-Neralu', 'Matadana' and 'Vamshavriksha' have been made into movies. —*Salar with agencies*

$1 TRILLION ECONOMY BY 2032

Cabinet approves Skill Dvpt Policy

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

The Cabinet approved the State's first-ever Skill Development Policy 2025–2032, which aims to position Karnataka as a premier hub for skilled talent and drive its vision of becoming a $1 trillion economy by 2032. A key highlight of the policy is the integration of vocational education into schools, colleges, and universities through credit-based programmes.

The policy leverages digital technologies and AI-driven tools for training, assessment, and career guidance through a unified digital portal. It also aimed to enhance international workforce mobility by facilitating global certifications, migration support, and specialised training.

The State had no formal skill development policy until now.

"The absence of a policy framework meant that skilling efforts were often fragmented across multiple departments." Dr. Sharanprakash Patil, Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development, Entrepreneurship & Livelihood said in a statement. "(This) policy addresses this gap by aligning skilling with education, employment, and industry requirements."

Five per cent of the schemes budget was earmarked for a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. Other notable features include "strong industry collaboration through apprenticeships, industry-led training, and ITI adoption, special interventions for women, persons with disabilities, marginalised communities, the urban poor, and the informal workforce" and an "expansion of GTTCs, and setting up rural and urban skilling hubs," a release said. —*Salar News*

MOB STORMS HOTEL OVER HINDI ROW

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

Members of a pro-Kannada organisation stormed into a five-star hotel here on Thursday to protest what they called the imposition of Hindi under the guise of 'Rajbhasha.'

The Ministry of Home Affairs' Rajbhasha Samiti was holding a 'Hindi Promotion Meeting' at the hotel, attended by six Members of Parliament, when activists forced entry.

They raised slogans alleging the event aimed to impose Hindi on non-Hindi-speaking states, creating tense scenes until police intervened. High Grounds police rushed to the venue and detained activists. —*PTI*

SKY LIGHTS UP

Dasara air show rehearsal a hit in Mysuru

MYSURU, 25 SEPT

The Indian Air Force IAF has set the stage for the much anticipated Dasara Air Show 2025 with a spectacular rehearsal at the packed Bannimantap Torch Light Parade grounds on Thursday evening. The main event is set to be held on 27 Sept.

This year's show promises to paint Mysuru's skies with patriotic pride and aerial artistry. The highlight of the rehearsal was the Sarang Helicopter Display Team, which flew five Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Dhruv, executing synchronised manoeuvres that had the crowd cheering from rooftops and balconies.

For at least 30 minutes, the helicopters carved dramatic patterns across the sky, including heart-shaped

A huge crowd watches in awe as five Sarang helicopters of the Indian Air Force perform a dazzling airshow rehearsal as part of the Dasara festivities in Mysuru PHOTOS: SALAR

DASARA AIR SHOW TIMINGS

- **When:** 4pm on Saturday
- **Where:** Bannimantap Torch Light Parade grounds in Mysuru
- **Witness:** A scintillating display of the renowned Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team. Entry for ticket holders only

Defence, this year's display aimed to inspire youth to join the armed forces.

The Sarang team, formed in 2003, is regarded as the brand ambassador of the Indian Armed Forces. Operating the indigenous ALH Dhruv, developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the team has carried out over 1,200 displays across 386 venues in India and abroad. The team has performed over 1,200 displays at more than 386 venues across India. —*Salar News*

1,000 WOMEN MARCH IN SAREES

Over 1,000 women wearing Mysuru silk sarees and Mysuru Jasmine flowers took out a heritage walk in Mysuru on Thursday, as part of Mysuru Dasara Mahotsav. The coloured procession, organised by Mahila Dasara Sub Committee, walked from Kote Anjaneyaswamy temple till JK Grounds, the venue of Mahila Dasara celebrations Kamsale, Keelu Kunitha, Puja Kunitha, and Kolata folk dance artistes also took part in the procession. The procession featured the display of Mysuru heritage crops like the famed Mysuru Vilydale (Mysuru betel leaves), Mysuru Mallige flower (Mysuru Jasmine), Nanjangudu Rasabale banana varieties, and Mysuru Pak sweets on a specially decorated vehicle during the heritage walk procession.

DKS again blames BJP for potholes, bad roads

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar blamed the previous BJP government's "misrule" for potholes in City.

"We are in this state due to the misrule of the previous BJP government. The protesting BJP leaders must understand that the Centre has not given any funds for Bengaluru's development in spite of the city's tax contributions. We will protect the interest of Bengaluru," he said, in response to the BJP's protests.

He cautioned the BJP that the Congress workers will protest against potholes in BJP-ruled municipal corporations in Hubli-Dharwad and other places. Asked if he would discuss the issue of potholes with industrialists, he said, "They are our friends, but they also must realise their responsibilities." He reiterated that Rs 750 crore had been granted to fill potholes in the City. "We are committed to fixing the pothole issue in Bengaluru. The CM has released a grant of Rs 750 crore for this purpose." —*PTI*

Congress say no ban on meeting Mamkootathil

PALAKKADA, 25 SEPT

Rahul Mamkootathil, suspended Congress MLA from Palakkad facing sexual misconduct allegations, returned to his constituency a month after the accusations. District Congress Committee President A Thankappan said party workers and constituents are free to meet him, adding, "People who voted for him will meet him. Should they stay away from their representative?" KPCC confirmed Mamkootathil remains suspended and will not attend party events. CPI (M) Palakkad Secretary EN Suresh Babu alleged a Congress MP close to Mamkootathil made inappropriate advances. Senior Congress leaders, including K Muraleedharan, and Muslim League leader PMA Salam defended his democratic right to meet voters. *—PTI*

BJP MLA Gaonkar elected Goa Assembly speaker

PANAJI, 25 SEPT

BJP MLA Ganesh Gaonkar was elected Speaker of the Goa Legislative Assembly on Thursday, winning 32 votes against Congress candidate Altone D'Costa's seven in a special session convened by Governor P Ashok Gajapathi Raju. The post fell vacant last month after Ramesh Tawadkar resigned to join the Pramod Sawant-led cabinet. Deputy Speaker Joshua D'Souza declared Gaonkar the new Speaker.. The BJP holds 28 seats in the 40-member House, supported by two Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party MLAs and three Independents. Gaonkar had previously served as protem Speaker in 2022. The Aam Aadmi Party said it reluctantly supported D'Costa, despite being "backstabbed" by Congress during the Delhi assembly polls.*—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

'Sardaar ji 3' shot before Pahalgam, not anti-nat'l: Diljit

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

Punjabi star Diljit Dosanjh has addressed the backlash over his film 'Sardaar Ji 3', which features Pakistani actress Hania Aamir. Speaking at a concert in Kuala Lumpur, he clarified that the film was shot in February, before the tragic Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives. "The media tried its best to portray me as anti-national but Punjabis and the Sikh community can never go against the nation," he stated. Dosanjh noted that India and Pakistan continue to play cricket, highlighting that "matches were being played" during filming. The film, which did not release in India, is directed by Amar Hundal and was showcased in overseas theatres.*—PTI*

HC flays lawyer on case against Arundhati Roy

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The Kerala High Court on Thursday questioned why the petitioner, Kochi-based lawyer Rajasimhan filed a plea against Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy's book, Mother Mary Come to Me, without noticing the disclaimer on its back cover. The publisher, Penguin Random House India, submitted that the book carries a clear statement: "Any depiction of smoking in this book is for representational purposes only. Penguin Random House India does not promote or endorse tobacco use." Rajasimhan had sought to prohibit the sale, circulation, and display of the book, claiming the cover glorified smoking, especially among women. The court noted other statutory remedies exist and adjourned the hearing to 7 October. *—PTI*

Cong & BJP trade blame over Ladakh violence

BJP says Cong instigated mob; Cong says it is BJP's doing

JAMMU/LEH, 25 SEPT

Charred remains of vehicles outside the BJP headquarters building lie in the aftermath of violent clashes between demonstrators and police during a protest demanding statehood for Ladakh *PHOTO: PTI*

A political war of words has erupted following Wednesday's deadly clashes in Ladakh, with the Congress accusing the BJP of creating the crisis and the BJP alleging Congress incitement.

Congress leader Pawan Khera said the deaths of four people in Leh were a "grim reminder" of the Modi government's failed promises. He asserted that Ladakh's demands for Sixth Schedule inclusion and protection of identity were "legitimate and just," calling for compassion, not neglect.

Backing Congress, former J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said it was "typical" of the BJP to shift blame. He questioned the Ladakh administration's failure to maintain peace and said the violence was a direct result of mismanagement.

The BJP, meanwhile, blamed Congress for orchestrating the violence. Party spokesperson Sambit Patra named Congress councillor Stanzin Tsepang as the "key instigator," accusing him of leading mobs and brandishing a weapon during the attack on the BJP office. Patra linked the unrest to a broader Congress strategy, drawing comparisons to political uprisings in neighbouring countries.

The Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) called for an impartial probe and demanded an end to the "witch-hunting" of protesters. It defended climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was accused of making provocative statements, and described the slain protesters as "heroes of Ladakh".

Prohibitory orders remain in force across Ladakh. In Kargil and other towns like Zanskar, Nubra, and Changtang, gatherings of five or more people, public speeches, and loudspeakers have been banned under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

Police said the situation was under control and are investigating possible foreign involvement, as three of the injured were Nepali citizens.

The next round of talks between Ladakhi leaders and the Centre is scheduled for 6 October. *—PTI*

SLAMS GOVT'S SILENCE

India must show leadership on Palestine issue: Sonia

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Asserting that India needs to demonstrate leadership on the issue of Palestine, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Thursday slammed the Modi government's stance, saying its response has been characterised by a "profound silence" and an abdication of both humanity and morality.

The government's actions appear to be driven primarily by the personal friendship between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu rather than India's constitutional values or its strategic interests, Gandhi said in her article published in The Hindu.

Gandhi pointed out that France has joined the United Kingdom, Canada, Portugal and Australia in recognising Palestinian statehood -- "the first step in the fulfilment of the legitimate aspirations of the long-suffering Palestinian people".

More than 150 of the 193 countries that are members of the United Nations have now done so.

Gandhi underlined that India had been a leader in this regard having formally recognised Palestinian statehood way back on 18 November, 1988.

On the critical and sensitive issue of Israel-Palestine India has long maintained a delicate but principled position, emphasising its commitment to peace and the protection of human rights, the former Congress chief said.

India needs to demonstrate leadership on the issue of Palestine, which is now a battle for justice, identity, dignity and human rights, Gandhi asserted.

Through multilateral forums platforms, India has urged negotiated settlements, adherence to international law, and a cessation of violence, she said.

Since the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Palestine in October 2023, India has all but relinquished its role, she opined. *—PTI*

BJP picks 3 heavyweights as poll-incharges in Bihar, WB, TN

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

Dharmendra Pradhan, Bhupender Yadav, Baijayant Panda *PHOTO: FB*

The BJP has announced significant leadership appointments ahead of upcoming Assembly elections in Bihar, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu. Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Bhupender Yadav, both prominent faces from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) and seasoned poll strategists, will oversee the elections in Bihar and West Bengal, respectively.

Baijayant Panda, National Vice President and MP, has been appointed the poll in-charge in Tamil Nadu. He has been instrumental in "in-charge" roles in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and most notably, Delhi.

The Bihar polls are likely in November, followed by polls in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu in March-April 2026. In a statement, BJP stated that CR Paatil, head of its Gujarat unit, and Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya will serve as co-in-charges for the Bihar elections. Former Tripura chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb will co-manage the West Bengal campaign, while Union minister Murlidhar Mohol will join Panda in Tamil Nadu.

BJP aims to maintain its alliance with JD(U) in Bihar while challenging Mamata Banerjee's TMC in West Bengal. In Tamil Nadu, the party is seeking to strengthen its position as a junior partner to the AIADMK against the ruling DMK. *—PTI*

KEJRIWAL TO GET RESIDENCE WITHIN 10 DAYS

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The Centre informed the Delhi High Court on Thursday that it will allot an accommodation to AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal in 10 days. The submissions were made before Justice Sachin Datta.

The court was hearing a petition filed by AAP seeking directions to provide a bungalow to the former Delhi chief minister. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, assured the same.

Senior Advocate Rahul Mehra, for AAP, said the accommodation should not be a downgrade from the Type seven or eight bungalow previously allotted. The court advised that if Kejriwal was dissatisfied, he could hold a conversation with the SG and approach the government again.

Kejriwal vacated his official residence at 6, Flagstaff Road on 4 October, 2024, and has since been staying at a party member's official residence near Mandi House. *—PTI*

Wayanad DCC chief quits after Priyanka's visit

WAYENAD, 25 SEPT

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during a meeting with with key officials at the Wayanad Collectorate *PHOTO: PTI*

Wayanad District Congress Committee (DCC) president ND Appachan has resigned from his post, days after Lok Sabha Opposition Leader Rahul Gandhi and former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi visited the constituency, now represented by Priyanka Gandhi.

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Sunny Joseph said that Appachan had "voluntarily submitted his resignation" and that the letter had been forwarded to the All India Congress Committee (AICC) for further action.

Appachan, a former MLA, however, hinted that his departure was not on the best of terms.

A revamp of KPCC and district units in Kerala were under discussion, but differences over names delayed the exercise. In Appachan's case, he was asked to step down following a string of controversies during Gandhi's visit to Wayanad, sources said.

Priyanka's tour was overshadowed by the suicide of local Congress worker Jose Nelladam and the suicide attempt of Padmaja, daughter-in-law of former district treasurer NM Vijayan.

Vadra will be in Bihar on Friday to interact with women self-help groups and address a rally.

This would be Vadra's second visit to the state in about a month. *—Agencies*

Did not meet Dhinakaran: Sengottaiyan

ERODE, 25 SEPT

Senior AIADMK leader KA Sengottaiyan has refuted claims of meeting any political figures especially during his recent visit to Chennai, asserting it was solely to visit his wife in hospital. Responding to queries about a supposed meeting with the AMMK general secretary on 24 September, he stated, "I did not meet anyone during my visit... It was a personal visit."

Sengottaiyan said, "AIADMK should remain united to continue the legacy of our founders and ensure the realisation of Amma's (Jayalalithaa) dream that the party rule lasts for one hundred years."

AIADMK faces challenges post the death of former chief minister Jayalalithaa in 2016, including internal strife and electoral losses. While former chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami has solidified his role as party general secretary and allied with BJP, Sengottaiyan's call for reunification was met with his removal from party positions. *—PTI*

LIQUOR SCAM

Ex-Chhattisgarh CM Baghel's son arrested

RAIPUR, 25 SEPT

PHOTO: ANI

Chaitanya Baghel, son of former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, has been arrested by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) in connection with a significant alleged liquor scam. He has been in judicial custody since his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on 18 July for a related money laundering case.

The ACB/EOW arrested both Chaitanya and Dipen Chawda, presenting them in a special court under the Prevention of Corruption Act. They have been remanded in custody until 6 October. The alleged scam, amounting to over Rs 2,500 crore, reportedly occurred between 2019 and 2022 during the Congress government's tenure.

Chaitanya's lawyer, Faisal Rizvi, claimed his client was arrested without evidence as part of a "pressure tactic." He added that Chaitanya's name does not appear in any of the chargesheets filed so far, which name approximately 45 other individuals, with 29 yet to be arrested. "The basis of arrest put before the special court by EOW is the statement of one of the accused related to Rs 1,000 crore." Rizvi stated.

The ED's fourth supplementary chargesheet alleged that Chaitanya led the syndicate orchestrating the scam and was involved in handling nearly Rs 1,000 crore in illicit proceeds. The investigation into the liquor scam, registered by the ACB/EOW in January, has implicated numerous individuals, including former excise minister Kawasi Lakhma and former chief secretary Vivek Dhand. *—PTI*

Trump, Modi share good ties: US

NEW YORK, 25 SEPT

The US official described US-India engagements as 'incredibly productive' but acknowledged existing tensions *PHOTO: PTI*

A senior US State Department official has emphasised the "very, very positive" relationship between President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighting their upcoming meeting amid ongoing discussions for the next Quad Summit, expected in early 2026.

The official described US-India engagements as "incredibly productive" but acknowledged existing tensions, particularly regarding India's purchase of discounted Russian oil.

No role in India-Pak Kashmir dispute: US

On the Kashmir issue, the US reaffirmed its long-standing position that it is a "direct issue" between India and Pakistan, with no intention of mediating. The official remarked, "We leave that (issue of Kashmir) up to India and Pakistan to solve."

Energy Secretary Chris Wright emphasised the importance of expanding trade and energy ties with India, despite "friction" over New Delhi's Russian oil imports. "We want to grow our relations with India," he stated, urging alternatives to Russian oil, noting that the US has oil to sell but "not Russian oil. *—PTI*

NOT ALLOWED GOODBYE

'Undocumented' Sikh woman deported from US after 33 years

CHANDIGARH, 25 SEPT

Harjit Kaur *PHOTO: AI*

A 73-year-old undocumented Sikh woman, Harjit Kaur, who lived in the US for over 30 years, was deported to India earlier this week after being detained by immigration authorities in California, her advocate said.

She was reportedly not allowed to say goodbye to her family before being sent back. In an Instagram post on Wednesday, her attorney Deepak Ahluwalia said, "Bibi ji is on her way back to Punjab. She has already landed in India." Kaur, a longtime resident of East Bay, Northern California, was detained after attending a routine ICE check, sparking protests from her family and community members.

According to Ahluwalia, Kaur was first taken to a Bakersfield detention center and later transported to Los Angeles in handcuffs, then flown to Georgia, and finally to New Delhi via an ICE-chartered flight.

Her family's request to allow her to say final goodbyes was denied. "We were trying to negotiate her release for 24-48 hours, even under ankle monitoring, to allow her to say goodbye. But around 2 am on Saturday, they took her to Los Angeles without notifying us," Ahluwalia said.

While in Georgia, Kaur endured harsh conditions, sleeping on the floor for 60-70 hours following a double knee replacement surgery and being denied showers. She received only wet wipes before boarding the flight to India. "Thankfully, they avoided cuffing her due to her age," Ahluwalia added.

Kaur arrived in the US in 1992 as a single mother of two. Her asylum request was denied in 2012, but she faithfully reported to ICE every six months for over 13 years. She had worked at an Indian garment store for more than two decades and leaves behind two sons, two grandsons, three granddaughters, and other relatives.

Following her detention, protests erupted in California with signs reading "Hands off our grandma" and "Bring grandma home." Her granddaughter, Sukhdeep Kaur, described her as an "independent, selfless, and hardworking woman" and a "mother figure" to the community. Family members expressed concern for her health, citing thyroid issues, migraines, knee pain, and anxiety, warning that detention posed serious risks to her life. *—PTI*

WB school job aspirants demand fair recruitment

KOLKATA, 25 SEPT

School job aspirants who appeared for recent West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) examinations protested in Salt Lake, on the eastern fringes of Kolkata, on Thursday, demanding fair recruitment in government-aided schools. They marched from Karunamoyee Metro station to Bikash Bhavan, the state education department headquarters. The agitators, who appeared for the State Level Selection Test (SLST) on 7 and 14 September, demanded the abolition of the provision awarding 10 extra marks to untainted teachers reinstated after a Supreme Court order. Protesters said the 10-grace-marks provision would deprive new candidates and violate norms ensuring a level playing field. They also demanded immediate release of vacancies.Aspirants sought a meeting with the state education minister. *—PTI*

Bank of Kuwait sues Kerala nurses for loan default

KOCHI, 25 SEPT

A total of 13 nurses from Kerala have been booked for defaulting on loans from Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait while working in the Gulf, bank representatives said on Thursday. Earlier, Gulf Bank had approached Kerala police, resulting in 10 cases in December 2024. According to Thomas J Anakkallunkul of James and Thomas Associates, the nurses defaulted on loans totalling Rs 10.33 crore, taken between 2019 and 2021 while working in Kuwait under the Ministry of Health. These nurses have migrated to other countries. Cases were registered across Kottayam and Ernakulam districts. Thomas said defaulted amounts ranged from Rs 61 lakh to Rs 91 lakh per nurse. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

HC protects actor Nagarjuna's personality rights

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The Delhi High Court on Thursday indicated it may grant ad-interim relief to Telugu actor Akkineni Nagarjuna, who has sought protection against misuse of his identity online. "When you can identify the URLs, the best .....," the court said. The petition flagged pornographic content falsely attributed to him, unauthorised merchandising, and AI-generated material using his likeness. Appearing before Justice Tejas Karia, Advocate Pravin Anand noted YouTube shorts and paid videos exploiting hashtags linked to Nagarjuna, warning they could train AI models. The Court acknowledged that online material can be used by generative AI regardless of authenticity, while considering the scope and duration of potential injunctions. The matter is listed for further hearing on 23 January. *—PTI*

2020 riots: Tahir Hussain denied bail in murder

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The Delhi High Court on Thursday denied bail to former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain in the murder case of Intelligence Bureau (IB) staffer Ankit Sharma during the February 2020 riots. The police had opposed Hussain's plea calling it a shocking case. He was caught and stabbed 51 times with a sharp weapon before his body was dumped into an adjoining drain. Hussain's counsel submitted that he had completed over five years in custody and in spite of the trial court's "best efforts" to expedite the trial, its conclusion might take time. Hussain was one of the four accused in the case. *—PTI*

India test-fires Agni missile with 2,500km range from train

First of its kind missile launch to undertaken by India

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The Defence Research and Development Organisation and Strategic Forces Command jointly conducted the successful launch of the Agni-Prime missile on 24 September *PHOTO: X/RAJNATHSINGH*

India has successfully test-fired the Agni-Prime missile with a range of 2,500 km from a rail-based mobile launcher system, demonstrating its capability to deploy the missile across the country.

A day after the next-generation missile was tested, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday that it put India in the group of select nations having capability to launch such a weapon system from the rail network.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in collaboration with the Strategic Forces Command (SFC), carried out the "successful" launch of intermediate range Agni-Prime missile under a full operational scenario on 24 September, the defence ministry said.

It has not disclosed the location of test-firing of the weapon system.

The "first-of-its-kind" launch carried out from specially designed rail-based mobile launcher, has the capability to move on rail network without any pre-conditions and it allows users to have a cross country mobility and launch within a short reaction time, Singh said.

"This successful flight test has put India in the group of select nations having capabilities that have developed canisterised launch system from on the move rail network," he said on X.

The ministry said the missile is equipped with all independent launch capability features, including the state-of-the-art communication systems and protection mechanisms.

"The missile trajectory was tracked by various ground stations and it was a text book launch meeting all mission objectives. This successful launch will enable futuristic rail-based systems induction into services," it said.

The launch was witnessed by senior scientists of the DRDO and officers of Strategic Forces Command.

The "road mobile" variant of Agni-Prime has already been inducted into the services after a series of successful flight trials.The test-firing of the missile came over four-and-half-months after the military conflict between India and Pakistan. *—PTI*

MORE CUTS LIKELY?

GST reforms will continue, ease tax burden, says PM

GREATER NOIDA, 25 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the reforms in Goods and Services Tax (GST) will continue and the tax burden on citizens will further ease as the economy gains more strength.

Modi emphasised that the nation currently possesses strong willpower for reforms, backed by democratic and political stability, along with policy predictability.

Earlier this month, India effected next-generation reforms in GST.

Inaugurating the Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show 2025 here, Modi said his government has significantly reduced taxes, curbed inflation, and increased both income and savings for the people.

With income up to Rs 12 lakh being tax-free and implementation of new GST reforms, citizens can save Rs 2.5 lakh crore this year alone.

The government introduced reforms in the indirect tax regime by implementing GST in 2017.

The Prime Minister also accused opposition parties of spreading falsehoods to cover up their own governance failures.

He also emphasised that India is advancing toward its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047Amidst these challenges, he said, India is laying a strong foundation for the coming decades.

He called upon the entrepreneurs, traders, and innovators present at the event to design business models that strengthen India's self-reliance.

To enhance ease of doing business over 40,000 compliances were eliminated, and hundreds of rules leading to legal cases over minor business errors were decriminalised.The armed forces too seek indigenous solutions. *—PTI*

SC cautions against changes to Hindu Succession Act

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The Supreme Court has observed that it would move cautiously while examining challenges to provisions of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, and that it would be wary of shattering the Hindu social structure and its basic tenets that have been in existence for thousands of years.

The court heard petitions challenging certain provisions of succession under the 1956 Act.

The top court said that while women's rights were important, there had to be "a balance between social structure and giving rights to women."

It referred the parties to it's mediation centre to explore settlement pending consideration of the broader issues.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for one of the petitioners, said that the provisions were discriminatory against women and could not be denied equal inheritance rights simply because of traditions.

Additional solicitor general KM Nataraj, appearing for the Centre, defended the Act as "well-crafted."

The top court examined Sections 15 and 16 of the Hindu Succession Act, which govern the devolution of property of a Hindu women dying intestate, or without a will.

According to Section 15 of the Act, when a Hindu woman dies intestate, her property devolves to her husband's heirs first before her own parents. *—PTI*

SC raps MP, CBI for inaction against cops

The Supreme Court criticised Madhya Pradesh authorities and the CBI for delays in acting against police officers accused in the custodial death of 24-year-old Deva Pardhi. Sanjit Singh Mavai and Uttam Singh Kushwaha have been absconding since April, despite non-bailable warrants and being declared proclaimed offenders. The CBI has announced a Rs 2 lakh reward each for information leading to their arrest, while earlier arrests were made. *—PTI*

RS 30,000 CR ASSETS

Priya wiped out money from Sunjay's kids' account, says Karisma

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

- While seeking confidentiality, Priya's lawyer claimed that it was a matter of security. She said contents may be made public.

Actor and former wife of late businessman Sunjay Kapur, Karisma Kapoor and her children's counsel on Thursday informed the Delhi High Court that all the money has been wiped off from the bank account that was disclosed in a purported will that was left by Sunjay.

The court head an application moved by Sunjay Kapur's wife Priya Sachdev Kapur, seeking permission to file the list of his personal assets and liabilities in a sealed cover with the parties to be bound by confidentiality, or in the alternative, constitution of Confidentiality Club.

The court said filing the list of personal assets and liabilities of late Kapur in a sealed cover may be "problematic" since his two children with Kapoor have a "right to question the assets disclosed."

While seeking confidentiality, Priya's lawyer claimed that it was a matter of security. The high court had asked Priya to submit a list of his assets. *—PTI*

Lalit Modi's cousin gets bail in rape case

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

- The case stems from an FIR in which the complainant alleged that Modi repeatedly raped and threatened her since 2019. He forced himself on her.

A Delhi court on Thursday granted bail to businessman Samir Modi, cousin of fugitive former IPL commissioner Lalit Modi, in a high-profile case involving rape, criminal intimidation, and cheating. Additional Sessions Judge Vipin Kharb allowed bail on a Rs 5 lakh bond with certain conditions during in-camera proceedings. A detailed order is awaited.

The case stems from an FIR in which the complainant alleged that Modi repeatedly raped and threatened her since 2019. According to her statement, Modi initially approached her under the pretext of offering career opportunities in the fashion and lifestyle industry. She claimed that in December 2019, he forced himself upon her at his residence in New Friends Colony and cheated her over a period of time.

Delhi Police had arrested Modi earlier this year, drawing significant attention due to his family links. Lalit Modi has been living in exile in London since 2010 following allegations of financial irregularities during his tenure as IPL commissioner. Samir Modi's legal team denies the allegations, calling them motivated and false.*—PTI*

Godman tracked women via CCTV feed on phone

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

Chaitanyananda Saraswati, 62, a self-styled godman and former chairman of a private management institute in southwest Delhi, has been booked for sexually harassing 17 female students. Police allege he monitored students through CCTV cameras across the campus, including outside hostel washrooms, directly on his phone.

Saraswati, also known as Swami Parthasarathy and a 'sanchalak' at the Sri Sharada Institute of Indian Management, reportedly used his BMW, valued at Rs 1.5 crore, to take students on trips to Rishikesh under the pretext of "industrial visits". The car has been seized, and investigators are examining dashcam footage for evidence.

Officials said the accused tampered with the institute's DVR, destroying crucial CCTV evidence. Earlier reports suggested he had converted his office into a "torture chamber," though police found no such facility during searches.

The investigation revealed Saraswati allegedly strengthened his control over the institute by subletting properties linked to Jagadguru Shankar acharya Mahasamsthanam Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetham to private firms, using the proceeds to buy luxury vehicles, with forged number plates. *—PTI*

Clash in Gujarat over social media post

AHMEDABAD, 25 SEPT

A violent clash erupted in Bahiyal village, Gandhinagar district, following an objectionable social media post, leading to the damage of several shops and vehicles.

Police have detained approximately 60 individuals in connection with the incident that occurred late Wednesday night.

According to Gandhinagar SP Ravi Teja Vasamsetty, "A social media post by a Hindu man on the ongoing trend 'I love Muhammad' enraged the minority community which led to the attack." A large group vandalised the shop of the individual who made the post, removing and burning goods.

The situation escalated as stones were hurled in both directions between the conflicting groups. Assistant Superintendent of Police Ayush Jain confirmed, "Heavy police security has been deployed... We have detained 60 persons, and others involved in the violence are being identified." *—PTI*

SIT raids Zubeen's manager, event organiser's home

GUWAHATI, 25 SEPT

Assam Police's special investigating team, probing the death of singer Zubeen Garg, conducted separate raids at the residences of Northeast India Festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta and his manager Siddhartha Sharma on Thursday.

The team visited the Geetanagar residence of Mahanta, where none of his family members, except for two helpers, were present.

Another team went to Sharma's apartment in Dhirenpara area and found it locked. The apartment's lock was broken in the presence of a magistrate, and a search was conducted by the team.

Sharma's mother, brother and sister also lived in the apartment, but they were not seen since the day Zubeen died, according to residents of the building.

The Assam government has constituted a 10-member SIT , led by Special DGP MP Gupta to investigate the singers's death in Singapore due to drowning in the sea on 19 September. The popular singer had gone there to perform in the festival.

His sudden death has led to a public outcry, with people demaning a probe and punisheing the guilty. *—PTI*

SEEKS RS 2CR IN DAMAGES

Wankhede sues SRK over parody in Aryan's debut show

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

- "This series disseminates a misleading and negative portrayal of anti-drug enforcement agencies, thereby eroding public confidence in law enforcement institutions," Wankhede's counsel said.

IRS officer and former NCB zonal director Sameer Wankhede on Thursday filed a defamation suit in the Delhi High Court against actor Shahrukh Khan and Gauri Khan owned Red Chillies Entertainment and Netflix for allegedly maligning his reputation in their series 'The Ba***ds of Bollywood'.

Wankhede's plea has sought permanent and mandatory injunction, declaration and damages against the Red Chillies Entertainment Private Limited, Netflix and others, for what he alleges is "false, malicious and defamatory video" of the production house and broadcast by Netflix as part of their television series.

Wankhede sought Rs 2 crore in damages which he wants to to be donated to the Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital for cancer patients.

"This series disseminates a misleading and negative portrayal of anti-drug enforcement agencies, thereby eroding public confidence in law enforcement insti tutions," Advocate Aditya Giri, one of the lawyers representing Wankhade, claimed.

The plea said the series has been deliberately conceptualised and executed with the intent to malign Wankhede's reputation in a colourable and prejudicial manner, especially when the case involving the officer andeShahrukh Khan's son Aryan khan is pending and sub-judice before the Bombay High Court and the NDPS Special Court in Mumbai.

It claimed that the series depicts a character making an obscene gesture—specifically, showing a middle finger after the character recites the slogan "Satyamev Jayate" which is the part of the National Emblem.

This act constitutes a grave and sensitive violation, which attracts penal consequences under law, it said.

The plea said the content of the series seeks to outrage national sentiment through the use of obscene and offensive material. *—PTI*

A SHIV TRIBUTE TO DURGA

An idol of Goddess Durga crafted entirely from Rudraksha beads stars at the Chetla Agrani Club pandal in Kolkata ahead of Durga Pooja. Rudraksha, sacred seeds from the Elaeocarpus ganitrus tree found in the Himalayas, are revered by Hindus as 'Shiva's tears' and are believed to offer spiritual protection and purity ***PHOTO: PTI***

Adani gag order fuels press freedom fears

The gag order on Gautam Adani and Adani group videos affects some of India's most prominent independent journalists and digital creators, including Ravish Kumar, Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and Dhruv Rathee ***PHOTO: PTI***

A recent Delhi court ruling in favour of industrial giant Adani Enterprises has triggered widespread alarm among media professionals and press freedom advocates. On 6 September, the court issued an ex parte injunction against nine journalists and digital platforms, barring them from publishing or sharing content deemed "unverified and defamatory" by Adani.

The gag order affects some of India's most prominent independent journalists and digital creators, including Ravish Kumar, Dhruv Rathee, Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, and Abhisar Sharma. The ruling ordered the immediate takedown of nearly 140 YouTube videos and over 80 Instagram posts, a move rapidly enforced by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB).

While the court clarified that "fair and accurate reporting based on substantiated and verified material" remains protected, legal experts argue the ruling raises fundamental concerns.

Legal overreach and 'pre-publication censorship'

According to lawyer Nakul Gandhi, who represents several journalists named in the case, the ex parte nature of the order, where the defendants are not given an opportunity to be heard, violates core democratic and legal principles.

"The order's breadth and speed of enforcement risk normalising pre-publication censorship," Gandhi told DW. "It creates a troubling precedent for silencing public interest journalism under the guise of protecting reputation."

Worse still, the injunction applies not just to those explicitly named but to a wider group of unnamed individuals, known legally as 'John Doe' or 'Ashok Kumar' defendants in India. Traditionally used in intellectual property cases, these blanket injunctions are now being used to extend media censorship without clear limits.

"This order could apply to absolutely anyone," said Abir Dasgupta, an independent journalist affected by the ruling. "There's no question it will have a chilling effect on future reporting."

A chilling effect on independent media

The ruling has drawn sharp reactions from affected journalists and digital commentators. Akash Banerjee, creator of the political satire channel The Deshbhakt, criticised the government's swift enforcement of the order.

"Look at the alacrity with which the MIB acted," Banerjee said. "There's lip service to press freedom, but when content critical of powerful corporations is involved, takedowns are immediate."

MK Venu, co-founder of The Wire, a digital news platform named in the order, said the government's support of Adani's legal efforts poses a serious threat to press freedom.

"This ruling allows a private corporation to define what is defamatory," Venu said. "If such actions go unchecked, journalists may soon be unable to question powerful business groups that enjoy government patronage."

Legal pushback begins

Last week, there was a glimmer of hope. A Delhi court quashed the gag order in the case of four journalists, after it was found they had not been given a chance to defend themselves before being silenced. Among them was Ravi Nair, an investigative reporter known for probing the intersection of corporate and political power.

"This is part of a larger trend of prior restraint—stopping publication before anything is legally proven to be defamatory," Nair said. He compared the tactic to SLAPP suits (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation), which are designed to intimidate and exhaust critics through prolonged legal battles rather than succeed on legal merit.

"I'm already fighting another defamation case filed by Adani in 2021," Nair added. "The aim is to exhaust journalists through legal costs, mental strain and time wasted. The process itself becomes the punishment."

Press freedom in decline

The Editors Guild of India has described the court's actions as "deeply troubling," highlighting the growing use of executive power to silence criticism.

"This has effectively handed a private entity the ability to define defamation and demand content takedown without due process," the Guild said in a statement. The South Asia Press Freedom Report published by the International Federation of Journalists in May painted a grim picture of the media environment in India. "The media, once a key pillar of Indian democracy, has been systematically weakened over the past decade," the report stated. "Corporate ownership, government interference, and legal intimidation have together tamed print and electronic media."

Adani: a corporate giant with political clout

At the centre of this storm is Gautam Adani, one of India's richest businessmen and chairman of the Adani Group, a conglomerate with major interests in infrastructure, transport, energy, mining, and consumer goods. The group operates some of India's largest airports and ports.

Adani is widely viewed as a close ally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with their business and political interests often appearing aligned.

Critics argue that this relationship offers Adani an unspoken layer of protection and influence. *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

Russian incursions expose chinks in Europe's armour

As the war in Ukraine drags on with no clear end in sight, Russia is intensifying pressure on NATO's eastern flank through a series of increasingly provocative incursions. Drone violations over Poland on 10 September and Romania days later, followed by three Russian fighter jets breaching Estonian airspace on 19 September, suggest a calculated effort to test the West's resolve.

Adding to this concern are unidentified drone flights that temporarily shut down airports in Copenhagen and Oslo, raising further suspicion of Kremlin involvement. While these actions might appear to signal a deliberate escalation, analysts suggest they are more likely aimed at masking Russia's stalling narrative of inevitable victory in Ukraine.

Russia's fading military momentum

Russia's summer offensive has yielded meagre territorial gains, fewer than 2,000 sq km, despite heavy losses. Since launching its full-scale invasion in February 2022, Moscow has captured around 70,000 sq km, tripling its initial gains. Yet as of September 2025, it controls 19 per cent of Ukrainian territory, only marginally more than the 18.5% it held at the beginning of the year.

Notably, Russian forces failed to capitalise on a much-publicised breakthrough near Pokrovsk in Ukraine's Donbas region, where a swift Ukrainian counteroffensive reversed any momentum. Still, Ukraine continues to face nightly missile and drone attacks, exposing persistent vulnerabilities in its air defence systems.

NATO's tepid response

NATO's reaction to these incursions has been cautious. In response to the Polish drone breach, it launched Eastern Sentry, a deterrence operation that, so far, appears symbolic more than substantial. Russia's subsequent violations of Estonian airspace and unregistered flights near Poland and Germany show little deterrent effect.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk issued a stern warning, vowing to "shoot down flying objects" violating national airspace. Yet he tempered this with a cautionary note: "It is important to think twice before deciding on actions that could trigger a very acute phase of conflict."

Across the Atlantic, US President Donald Trump has been notably restrained. Regarding the drone incursion into Poland, he floated the possibility that it was "a mistake" before pledging NATO's defence only in the event of a full-scale Russian attack. While less dismissive than in previous years, Trump's stance remains reactive rather than preventive.

US retreat and Europe's slow awakening

The wider implications of Trump's approach are becoming increasingly evident. US arms shipments to Europe, intended to bolster Ukraine's defences, have been scaled back as the Pentagon prioritises rebuilding its own stockpiles. Moreover, Trump's phase-two sanctions on Russia are now conditional upon prior action by all NATO and G7 allies, further weakening the West's collective pressure on Moscow.

The Baltic Security Initiative, a long-standing US support programme for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, also faces potential budget cuts, stirring fears of abandonment among frontline NATO members.

Meanwhile, Europe's efforts to plug the gap left by America's retrenchment are sluggish. Despite vocal support for Ukraine, the combined defence budgets of the EU's five largest military spenders—France, Germany, Poland, Italy, and the Netherlands, are still less than a quarter of US defence expenditure.

Structural issues further weaken Europe's security posture. The EU's defence-industrial capacity remains fragmented. Its flagship programme, Security Action for Europe, has been delayed over disagreements about the participation of non-EU partners like the UK and Canada, countries with vital defence capabilities.

Even ambitious projects such as the Future Combat Air System, intended to modernise Europe's air forces, have become bogged down in Franco-German rivalry, slowing progress and eroding trust between key players.

Ukraine holds the line, for now

So far, Ukraine has managed to hold back the Russian onslaught largely through its own ingenuity and resilience. While dependent on Western aid, it has significantly ramped up domestic defence production and innovated on the battlefield.

This tenacity has allowed the West to "muddle through" with piecemeal support.

Trump's ambiguous NATO stance, coupled with the alliance's slow and fragmented response, has left just enough uncertainty to deter Russia from launching a broader assault—for now.

But Russian President Vladimir Putin appears increasingly willing to test boundaries. If unchallenged, he may push further into neutral or contested airspace, with potentially explosive consequences.

Time for a strategic shift

The West's current strategy, reactive and fragmented, is no longer sufficient. NATO and the EU must send a clearer message to Moscow that violations of airspace and territorial integrity will carry consequences. *—PTI*

Since launching its full-scale invasion in February 2022, Moscow has captured around 70,000 sq km in Ukraine, tripling its initial gains ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Arresting me will cause more problems: Sonam amid Ladakh stir

The statehood for Ladakh movement descended into violence, arson and street clashes in Leh on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

- Union Home Ministry alleged that the mob violence was guided by the "provocative statements" of activist Wangchuk and certain "politically motivated" individuals.

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Thursday said that his imprisonment could create more problems for the government than his freedom and called the home ministry's act of blaming him for recent violent protests in Ladakh a "scapegoat tactic".

Reacting to the MHA's statement, which had blamed him for provoking the mob violence on Wednesday, Wangchuk said he is prepared to be arrested under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA).

"I see they are building up a case to bring me under the Public Safety Act and throw me in jail for two years," he told PTI over the phone and added that "I am ready for that, but Sonam Wangchuk in jail may cause them more problems than free Sonam Wangchuk."

The climate activist also said, "To say it (the violence) was instigated by me, or sometimes by Congress, is to find a scapegoat, rather than addressing the core of the problem, and this will lead us nowhere.

"They may be clever in making somebody else a scapegoat, but they are not wise. At this time, we all need wisdom rather than 'cleverness' because youths are already frustrated," said Wangchuk.

The activist strongly attributed the eruption of violence to anger over long-standing grievances, primarily the frustration among the region's youth and reasoned that the real cause is the "frustration of six years of unemployment and unmet promises at every level."

Sonam Wangchuk said that by employing the 'scapegoat tactic', the government is not actually taking measures for peace ***PHOTO: PTI***

He accused the government of misleading the public by claiming success on partial job reservations, noting that the main demands for Statehood and the extension of the Sixth Schedule to protect Ladakh's tribal status and fragile environment remain "untouched after five years of peaceful appeals.

Wangchuk said that by employing the "scapegoat tactic," the government is "not actually taking measures for peace," but instead taking steps that will "further aggravate" the situation by diverting attention from the people's core demands.

The statehood for Ladakh movement led by Wangchuk descended into violence, arson and street clashes in Leh on Wednesday, leaving four people dead and at least 80 injured, including 40 police personnel, officials said.

As the sun set on what is arguably the worst day of violence since 1989 in the cold desert region, Wangchuk called off his fortnight-long hunger strike to press for the demands, while authorities clamped curfew in the Leh district.

Earlier in the day, groups of youths, indulging in arson and vandalism, targeted the headquarters of the BJP and the Hill Council and set vehicles ablaze.

Police and paramilitary forces, deployed in strength across the town, lobbed teargas shells to bring the situation under control, the officials said.

In a statement last night, the Union Home Ministry alleged that the mob violence was guided by the "provocative statements" of activist Wangchuk and certain "politically motivated" individuals, who were not happy with the progress made in the ongoing talks between the representatives of the government and Ladakhi groups.

The Ministry said barring a few unfortunate incidents that happened early on Wednesday, the situation was brought under control by 4pm and asked everyone not to circulate old and provocative videos in the media and social media.

"It is well known that the Government of India has been actively engaged with the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance. Series of meetings were held with them through formal channel of High Powered Committee (HPC) as well as sub-committee and multiple informal meetings with leaders," the statement issued on Wednesday had said.

"However, certain politically motivated individuals were not happy with the progress made under HPC and have been trying to sabotage the dialogue process," it said.

The next meeting of the High Powered Committee has been scheduled for October 6. Meetings are also planned for September 25 and 26, with leaders from Ladakh.

Terming the events as heart-wrenching, Lt Governor Kavinder Gupta had said everyone has the right to speak up in a peaceful manner in a democratic system, but what happened was not spontaneous and was the result of a conspiracy.

"We will not spare those people who have spoiled the atmosphere here."

Curfew has been imposed as a precautionary measure to prevent more casualties, he had said. *—PTI*

Will step down after the war, vows Zelenskyy

KYIV, 25 SEPT

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he will be ready to step down once the war with Russia is over, stressing that his focus is ending the conflict rather than pursuing another term in office. "My goal is to finish the war, not to continue running for office," he told Axios. The comments are among his clearest signals yet that he does not intend to remain in power indefinitely. Elections have not been held in Ukraine after Russia launched its full scale invasion, as Kyiv has been under martial law. Moscow has often dismissed Zelenskyy as an "illegitimate" leader, pointing to the absence of elections. Earlier, when addressing the UN General Assembly, Zelenskyy said that the several wars in the world were pushing the world into a global arms race. ***—Salar News***

Karki: Will take action against protesters' deaths

KATHMANDU, 25 SEPT

Nepalese Prime Minister Sushila Karki on Thursday said that the government is committed to taking stern action against those responsible for the death of 74 people, including students, during the Gen Z protests. In her first televised address to the nation after assuming the post of caretaker Prime Minister, Karki said the government has already started work related to conducting the Parliamentary election on 5 March, as per the mandate given to the government. She called on all sections of the society to cooperate in maintaining a law and order situation. Karki made it clear that the present government is not mandated to amend the constitution and to alter the system of governance. ***—PTI***

Malawi elects former-prez Mutharika

BLANTYRE, 25 SEPT

Former president Peter Mutharika has reclaimed Malawi's presidency, defeating incumbent Lazarus Chakwera in a closely watched election. Mutharika, 85, won 56 per cent of the vote, the Malawi Electoral Commission confirmed, clearing the threshold to avoid a runoff. Chakwera, who secured 33 per cent, conceded defeat on national television before the final results were announced on Wednesday. In his address, Chakwera said his concession was made "out of respect for your will as citizens and out of respect for the constitution." His defeat marks a reversal of fortunes after his historic 2020 victory, when a court annulled Mutharika's 2019 win. ***—PTI***

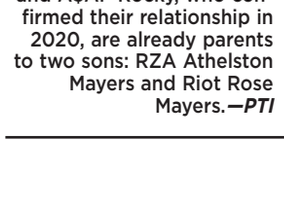


PHOTO: X

Riri, ASAP Rocky welcome first baby girl

LOS ANGELES, 25 SEPT

Grammy-winning musician Rihanna, 37, and her longtime partner, rapper A$AP Rocky, have announced the birth of their third child, a baby girl. The singer shared the joyous news on Instagram on Wednesday. Posting a picture of herself cradling the newborn, along with an image of the baby's pink shoes, Rihanna revealed her daughter's name as Rocki Irish Mayers, born on 13th September 2025. A$AP Rocky, 36, commented on the post, affectionately writing: "MY LIL LADIES." The couple publicly confirmed the pregnancy at the 2025 Met Gala, where the Barbadian star famously showcased her baby bump. Rihanna and A$AP Rocky, who confirmed their relationship in 2020, are already parents to two sons: RZA Athelston Mayers and Riot Rose Mayers. ***—PTI***

Don wants probe into UN's 'triple sabotage'

Trump involves Secret Service as no one could hear speech, escalator & teleprompter didn't work

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 25 SEPT

US President Donald Trump has demanded an investigation into three "sinister events" at the UN headquarters, including an escalator breaking down while he and First Lady Melania Trump were on it, describing them as "triple sabotage".

On Truth Social on Wednesday, he also said the UN should be "ashamed" of itself.

"A REAL DISGRACE took place at the UN— Not one, not two, but three very sinister events!" Trump said.

The first incident was when the escalator going up to the main speaking floor came to a "screeching halt" shortly after the First Lady and Trump stepped onto it.

"It's amazing that Melania and I didn't fall forward onto the sharp edges of these steel steps, face first," Trump said, adding that those behind the incident should be arrested.

Then, as Trump came on the UNGA podium to deliver his address to the General Debate of the 80th UN General Assembly session, the teleprompter broke.

Thirdly, Trump said that the sound was completely off in the UN General Assembly hall and the world leaders couldn't hear a thing unless they used the interpreters' earpieces.

"The first person I saw at the conclusion of the speech was Melania, who was sitting right up front. I said, 'How did I do?' And she said, 'I couldn't hear a word you said."

"No wonder the United Nations hasn't been able to do the job that they were put in existence to do. All security tapes at the escalator should be saved, especially the emergency stop button. The Secret Service is involved," he added. *—PTI*

The escalator to the 80th session United General Assembly had abruptly halted with President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump on it, forcing the power couple to climb the stairs **PHOTO: PTI**

China to cut emissions by 10% by 2035: Xi

Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the world's largest carbon-polluting country would aim to cut emissions by 7 per cent to 10 per cent by 2035. China spews more than 31 per cent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. This comes after Trump called the climate crisis a "con job" in the UN.

Syrian Prez speaks at UN; 1st in 60 years

For the first time in almost 60 years, a Syrian President addressed the UNGA on Wednesday. As he spoke, hundreds of people gathered in front of giant screens in Syria. Ahmad al-Sharaa "Syria is reclaiming its rightful place", while calling for the UN to lift all sanctions on his country and blasting Israel.

Iran will never build a nuclear bomb: Prez

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in his address at the UNGA, said, "I hereby declare once more before this assembly that Iran has never sought and will never seek to build a nuclear bomb". He also held up a picture of children killed by Israel, and questioned leaders on their double standards.

Sharif meets Lankan Prez, Yunus

ISLAMABAD, 25 SEPT

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held separate meetings with Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus and President of Sri Lanka Anura Kumara Dissanayake and discussed bilateral ties.

The meetings were held on Wednesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York where all three leaders were present to attend the session.

During Sharif's "warm and cordial" meeting with Yunus, the two leaders reviewed the current state of Pakistan-Bangladesh bilateral relations and discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation in diverse areas including trade, regional connectivity and people-to-people exchanges, according to an official statement by Pakistan.

According to another statement, Sharif and President Dissanayake meeting, held at Sri Lanka's Permanent Mission to the UN, covered a wide range of areas, including high level exchanges, bilateral trade, educational cooperation, cultural exchanges, and defence cooperation.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met Sri Lanka Anura Kumara Dissanayake in New York, where the UNGA is being held **PHOTO: X**

Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhance bilateral engagement with Sri Lanka in all spheres. Both leaders also agreed to enhance exchanges in sports, particularly cricket. *—PTI*

Kamala faces protests over Gaza

Former vice president Kamala Harris, forced to confront Israel's war in Gaza on the first night of her book tour, expressed compassion for the Palestinians. "What's happening to the Palestinian people is outrageous and it beaks my heart," she said. "Donald Trump has given (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu a blank cheque to do whatever he wants." Harris was vice president when Israel's onslaught started and had continued to supply arms to Israel during her tenure. Trump responded by calling her "DUMB AS A ROCK."

Kirk may feature on US' currency

Republican lawmakers are preparing to introduce legislation this week urging the Trump administration to mint four-hundred-thousand silver dollar coins featuring late Conservative Charlie Kirk's image. If passed, Kirk would become the youngest American to appear on US currency. One side is expected to feature Kirk's portrait, while the other would bear the phrase "Well done, good and faithful servant." His full name — Charles James Kirk — the year 2026, and the US name and motto are also likely to be engraved.

Ex-French Prez found guilty of being funded by Libya's Gaddafi

PARIS, 25 SEPT

Paris court sentenced former French President Nicolas Sarkozy to 5 years in prison and — in a major surprise — said he'll be incarcerated even if he appeals, after finding him guilty Thursday in his trial for alleged illegal campaign financing from the government of then-Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The court found Sarkozy guilty of criminal association in a plot from 2005 to 2007 to finance his campaign with funds from Libya in exchange for diplomatic favours.

With the verdict, the 70-year-old Sarkozy becomes the first former French president found guilty of accepting illegal foreign funds to win office.

The accusations trace their roots to 2011, when a Libyan news agency and Gaddafi himself said the Libyan state had secretly funnelled millions of euros into Sarkozy's 2007 campaign, to prevent the West from "maligning" the late Libyan leader's image.

Sarkozy has dismissed the allegations and alleged that the "plot" was a retaliation for his stance on Libya.

Sarkozy was one of the first Western leaders to push for military intervention in Libya in 2011, when Arab Spring pro-democracy protests swept the Arab world. *—PTI*

Drones disrupt flights at 4 Danish airports

COPENHAGEN, 25 SEPT

Drone activity overnight Wednesday into Thursday forced temporary closures at Aalborg Airport in northern Denmark and disrupted operations at three other airports, police confirmed. Authorities said they were unable to neutralise the drones but emphasised there was no direct threat to the public.

Aalborg, which serves both commercial and military flights, was shut for three hours, while Billund, the country's second-largest airport, closed for one hour. Drones were also observed near Esbjerg and Sonderborg airports, as well as over the Skrydstrup airbase, home to F-16 and F-35 fighter jets, and a military facility in Holstebro.

The incident followed drone incursions earlier in the week at Copenhagen Airport, which halted flights in the capital for hours. Authorities have now categorised the incursions as a "hybrid attack" involving a "professional actor," though no state has been accused.

Denmark has raised its crisis level and may seek consultations under NATO's Article 4, already invoked by Poland and Estonia following similar episodes. Officials warned the disruptions highlight vulnerabilities in European airspace and reflect an escalating pattern of concern across the continent. *—Agencies*

People walk through Hong Kong, flooded by Typhoon Ragasa, one of the strongest storms in recent years **PHOTO: PTI**

Italy, Spain send Navy to protect Sumud Flotilla

MADRID/ JERUSALEM, 25 SEPT

Spain and Italy have sent naval ships into the Mediterranean Sea, to protecting the Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF), which is carrying aid towards Gaza. The GSF, which carries several activist including Greta Thunberg, has been attacked at least three times, including on Wednesday.

38 people were killed by Israel in Gaza on Thursday

Both the countries vowed to protect the flotilla, which consists of some 50 ships. Israel, meanwhile, has vowed to top the flotilla.

While condemning Israel, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said the Navy was being deployed "to ensure that our citizens can be rescued and brought back."

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said her Navy was not expected to use military force. She also called the activists' maritime gambit "dangerous, irresponsible".

Meanwhile a drone launched by Yemen's Houthi rebels wounded 22 people in southern Israeli city Eilat. *—Agencies*

The Global Sumud Flotilla, aiming to break Israel's blockade in Gaza has been attacked three times **PHOTO: X**

Weak Typhoon Ragasa heads towards Vietnam

SHENZHEN, 25 SEPT

A weakened Tropical Storm Ragasa pushed west along the southern Chinese coast toward Vietnam on Thursday after flooding streets and homes in the economic hub of Guangdong province and causing deaths in Taiwan and the Philippines earlier in the week.

More than 2 million people were relocated across Guangdong ahead of Ragasa, which peaked at super-typhoon strength Monday with maximum sustained winds of 265kmph and the world's strongest cyclone of the year.

Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chính ordered government ministries and local authorities to protect infrastructure like dams and hospitals, secure fishing vessels and coastal assets, and ready evacuation and search and rescue operations. Some flights were cancelled or rescheduled, and workers trimmed trees to avoid wind hazards in the northern part of the country.

For Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, activities halted earlier in the week were gradually returning to normal. In Taiwan, authorities on Thursday revised the death toll from 17 to 14 due to repeated records. *—PTI*

'ALWAYS WANTED TO KILL 1'

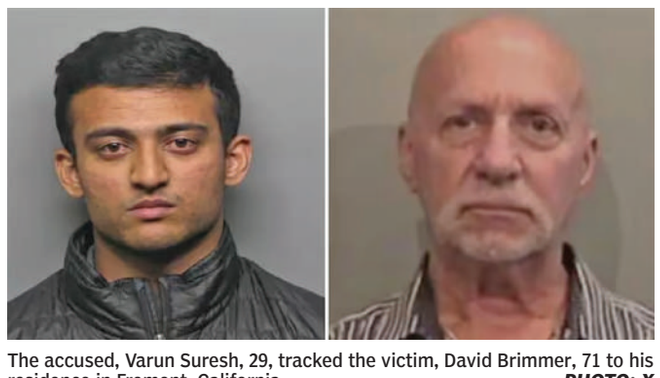
Sex offenders deserve to die: Indian kills pedo

LOS ANGELES, 25 SEPT

An Indian man tracked down and stabbed a registered sex-offender to death on 18 Sept, according to court documents. He was charged with murder on Monday. Police said that the accused described the incident as "honestly really fun" and that paedophiles "deserved to die".

The accused, Varun Suresh, 29, tracked the victim, David Brimmer, 71 to his residence of the victim in Fremont city using California's Megan's Law website. It listed Brimmer as a sex offender who had spent nine years in jail for abusing a child.

Suresh pretended to be public accountant, going door to door, looking for clients. He first visited a few neighbour's houses before going to the Brimmer's door.



The accused, Varun Suresh, 29, tracked the victim, David Brimmer, 71 to his residence in Fremont, California **PHOTO: X**

When Suresh approached the victim's residence, he shook Brimmer's hand and said, "I knew I had the right guy".

Brimmer then attempted to escape, but Suresh chased him down to a neighbour's house nearly two blocks away and stabbed him in the neck. Suresh asked a critically injured Brimmer to "repent", as he grovelled, before slitting his throat.

Suresh allegedly told police that he had no intention of getting away, and would have called the police himself.

"Everyone hates paedophiles... so like, it should be cool. It should be cool," he said. "It is not your duty to decide whether Heaven will accept them, it's your duty to send them to the gates."

Police said Suresh showed no remorse. He believes all sex offenders "deserve to die" because they hurt children.

Suresh was previously arrested in 2021 after he left a suspicious bag at Hyatt Place, where Fremont police had shot and killed a suspect in an unrelated incident the previous night.

After his 2021 arrest, Suresh reportedly told police that he believed the CEO of Hyatt Hotels "was a paedophile, that he wanted to kill him and that he was hunting the CEO." *—Salar News*

7 monks, including Indian, die in Lankan cable cart crash

COLOMBO, 25 SEPT

Seven Buddhist monks, including an Indian national, were killed and six others injured on Wednesday after a cable-operated rail cart overturned at a forest monastery in northwestern Sri Lanka. The police said that the fatal incident occurred at the Na Uyana Aranya Senasanaya, a well-known monastery in Nikaweratiya, located about 125 km from Colombo.

The site is a popular destination for meditation retreats, attracting practitioners globally.

Among the seven monks who died were an Indian, a Russian, and a Romanian national, police confirmed. Four of the six injured monks are currently listed in critical condition. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Silver prices hit record high; gold drops by Rs 630

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Silver prices rallied Rs 1,000 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1.40 lakh per kg here on Thursday following strong global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold prices, on the other hand, dropped by Rs 630 to Rs 1,17,370 per 10 grams due to poor offtake by retailers. The precious metal had closed at Rs 1,18,000 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by Rs 700 to Rs 1,16,700 per 10 grams from Rs 1,17,400 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices marched ahead in line with global trends. In futures trade, silver prices scaled new record levels. The December contract of white metal zoomed Rs 3,528 or 2.63 per cent to hit a record high of Rs 1,37,530 per kilogram. *—PTI*

Rupee recovers slightly from record low

MUMBAI, 25 SEPT

The rupee recovered 7 paise to close at 88.68 against the US dollar on Thursday, after hitting a record low of 88.75 the previous day. The recovery was attributed to suspected RBI intervention and dollar selling by exporters, despite pressure from rising crude oil prices, the US H1-B visa fee hike, and weak domestic markets. The rupee traded in a narrow range of 88.60–88.70. Analysts expect continued weakness due to global risk aversion and geopolitical tensions. Meanwhile, Sensex fell 555.95 points and Nifty dropped 166.05 points. FIIs offloaded equities worth Rs 2,425.75 crore. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is in the US for trade talks. *—PTI*

S&P grants Bank of Maharashtra 'BBB-' rating

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) said on Thursday that S&P Global Ratings has granted it an investment-grade 'BBB-' rating with a 'Stable' outlook, citing its robust capital, strong funding base and healthy liquidity. The assessment, which also includes a Standalone Credit Profile of 'BBB-', should reduce the bank's cost of funds and enable it to tap overseas markets. BoM is rated three notches above its current 'BB-' from Fitch. Managing Director and CEO Nidhu Saxena said the recognition reflects improving performance and stakeholder trust, placing BoM among a select group of Indian public sector banks rated by S&P. *—PTI*

Singapore and Indian shipyards sign MoU

NEW DELHI/SINGAPORE, 25 SEPT

Singapore's Seatrium Offshore Technology Pte Ltd (SOT) and India's Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), the country's largest shipbuilder and repairer, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen cooperation in the offshore sector across Asia. The agreement was signed virtually on Thursday. The partnership will combine SOT's engineering expertise and specialised offshore solutions with CSL's extensive infrastructure and ship repair capabilities to jointly pursue new business opportunities. The initial focus will be on Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) projects for clients operating in Asia, while the companies plan to explore other key regional markets. The MoU provides a framework for joint marketing, project execution, and technology collaboration, laying the groundwork for a long-term strategic alliance. Both companies aim to support India's energy transition, enhance maritime capabilities, and deliver integrated offshore asset solutions across the region. *—PTI*

NIFTY SLIPS BELOW 25K AS 'H1B FEAR BEAR' GRIPS MKTS

Sensex slips by 555 pts as mkts tumble for 5th day as investors stay jittery

MUMBAI, 25 SEPT

Stock markets closed with losses for the fifth consecutive day on Thursday, with the Sensex tumbling 555.95 points due to relentless foreign fund outflows and concerns over the US H1B visa fee, making investors jittery.

The US imposing a USD 1,00,000 fee on new H1B visas has triggered a market sell-off, with IT stocks plunging, as H1B visa fears spark a bearish sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 555.95 points or 0.68 per cent to settle at 81,159.68. During the day, it dropped 622.74 points or 0.76 per cent to 81,092.89.

The 50-share NSE Nifty tumbled 166.05 points or 0.66 per cent to 24,890.85.

A weak trend in global peers also hit the investor sentiment, analysts said.

Among Sensex firms, Trent, Power Grid, Tata Motors, Tata Consultancy Services, Asian Paints, NTPC, Adani Ports and Bajaj Finance were the laggards.

Among Sensex firms, Trent, Power Grid, Tata Motors, TCS, Asian Paints, NTPC, Adani Ports and Bajaj Finance were the laggards ***PHOTO: AI***

However, Bharat Electronics, Axis Bank and Bharti Airtel were the major gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,425.75 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

The BSE smallcap gauge dropped 0.75 per cent and midcap declined by 0.72 per cent. Among sectoral indices, realty tanked 1.70 per cent, followed by power (1.38 per cent), BSE Focused IT (1.23 per cent), utilities (1.21 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.14 per cent), BSE Focused IT (1.23 per cent), IT (1.10 per cent), auto (0.93 per cent) and teck (0.75 per cent).

Telecommunication and metal were the gainers.

As many as 2,709 stocks declined while 1,474 advanced and 136 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In the past five trading days, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,854.28 points or 2.23 per cent, and the Nifty dropped 532.75 points or 2 per cent. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.55 per cent to USD 68.93 a barrel. *—PTI*

NSE investor base crosses 12cr

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has crossed 12 crore unique investors as of September 23, adding the latest crore in just eight months. Women now make up one in four investors. The investor base, with a median age of 33, has grown rapidly due to digitisation, fintech access, and supportive policies. Maharashtra leads with 1.9 crore investors, followed by Uttar Pradesh (1.4 crore) and Gujarat (1.03 crore). Nearly 40 per cent of investors are under 30, and coverage spans 99.85% of India's pin codes. In FY25 so far, Nifty 50 has returned 7per cent and Nifty 500 9.3per cent.

Firms to pass 30-70% of H1B cost to clients: Crisil

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The United States government's decision to impose a USD 1,00,000 fee on new H1B visas for foreign workers will have only a marginal effect on Indian Information Technology (IT) services companies, as per the report by Crisil Intelligence.

The analysis estimates the move will trim between 10 and 20 basis points from operating margins in the next financial year. Indian IT firms recorded margins of around 22 per cent last year. However, the additional cost is expected to be partly passed on to clients, with firms likely to recover between 30 and 70 per cent.

Crisil noted that Indian IT firms have reduced their dependence on H1B visas since 2018, when high rejection rates prompted companies to expand offshore delivery centres, recruit locally in the US, and invest in near-shore hubs.

Data from US Citizenship and Immigration Services shows that Indian employees on H1B visas at leading firms, such as TCS, Infosys, Wipro, and HCL, has nearly halved between 2017 and 2025. The new fee structure takes effect on 21 September, covering only fresh applications. *–ANI*

HAL to start delivering Tejas to IAF in 2027

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) is set to deliver 97 Tejas MK-1A light combat aircraft to the Indian Air Force (IAF) beginning in 2027-28, with all deliveries scheduled for completion over six years. The order includes 68 single-seat and 29 twin-seat fighters, along with associated equipment, and follows the Cabinet Committee on Security's recent approval of the procurement.

This deal is a significant step in modernising the IAF's fleet and strengthening India's domestic defence manufacturing capabilities. The jets will feature over 64 per cent indigenous content and incorporate advanced systems such as the Uttam AESA radar, Swayam Raksha Kavach, and upgraded control surface actuators.

The Mk-1A variant is designed to replace the ageing MiG-21 fleet, which is being phased out after decades. The project is expected to generate 11,750 direct and indirect jobs annually and will involve over 100 Indian companies.

Tejas Mk-1A is a single-engine, multi-role fighter capable of air defence, maritime reconnaissance, and strike missions in high-threat environments. The acquisition, under the 'Buy (India-IDDM)' category, reflects the government's push for indigenisation and self-reliance in defence. IAF fighter squadrons is reduced to 31 from the sanctioned 42. *–PTI*

Infosys to invest Rs 300 crore in Punjab campus

CHANDIGARH, 25 SEPT

Infosys Limited is set to establish a new campus in Mohali with an investment of Rs 300 crore, Punjab Industry Minister Sanjeev Arora announced on Thursday. Spread over 30 acres, the project's first phase will see 300,000 square feet of space built, creating around 2,500 jobs in the city. A further 480,000 square feet will be developed in the second phase.

Arora stated Infosys, which is in Mohali since 2017, is expanding its footprint as part of the state's drive to attract major investments. Sameer Goel, head of the firm's Mohali centre, expressed gratitude for the Punjab government's support. The minister added that the state's pro-industry measures, including approvals for industrial projects within 45 days, have boosted investor confidence. *—PTI*

India to establish nuclear liability fund

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

The Central government is preparing to set up a dedicated nuclear liability fund to cover compensation claims exceeding Rs 1,500 crore ($169 million) in the event of a nuclear accident, Reuters reported, citing senior officials. This move aims to resolve long-standing concerns over risk-sharing, which have deterred foreign suppliers and private firms from investing in India's nuclear sector.

Currently, India's liability law caps operator responsibility at Rs 1,500 crore, with the government covering claims beyond that. However, the lack of a structured mechanism for liabilities above the cap has created uncertainty, particularly for international suppliers wary of open-ended risks.

The proposed fund, backed by government allocations and possibly industry contributions, will provide a predictable financial framework, ensuring both supplier confidence and assured compensation for victims. Officials said the initiative is designed to unlock stalled projects and encourage participation from US, French, and Japanese firms, which have demanded clearer safeguards.

The fund is seen as critical to advancing India's nuclear ambitions, which are central to its clean energy transition and 2070 net-zero goals. Nuclear contributes less than 3 per cent of India's power. *—PTI*

4% DROP

Tata Motors shares fall amid JLR cyberattack

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

Tata Motors' share price fell by 4 per cent following reports from the Financial Times detailing significant challenges faced by its subsidiary, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), due to an ongoing cyberattack. This attack may lead to losses exceeding £2 billion, as JLR lacks insurance against the incident that has disrupted operations and incurred financial losses.

Reports indicate that JLR initially extended its production halt until 24 September, with the suspension now extended to 1 October. While the company has not provided an official financial impact estimate, BBC reports suggest weekly losses of £50 million ($68 million), with many of its 33,000 employees instructed to stay home until the situation is resolved.

If the £2 billion loss materialises, it would surpass JLR's Profit After Tax for the entire financial year 2025 of £1.8 billion. Notably, prior to the incident, JLR struggled to secure a cyber insurance agreement with Lockton, the world's largest independent insurance brokerage.

Currently, Tata Motors shares opened at Rs 673 on the BSE, touching an intraday high of Rs 675.35 and a low of Rs 655.30. Anshul Jain, Head of Research at Lakshmishree, stated, "Immediate support is placed near 650, critical for bulls to defend." *—Salar News*

Reliance, Coca-Cola to invest Rs 65,000 cr

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

Betting big on the country's food processing sector, Reliance Consumer Products and three bottlers of Coca-Cola announced over Rs 65,000 crore investment to set up facilities on the first day of the World Food India Summit.

Union Food Processing Industries Minister Chirag Paswan on Thursday said the sector would attract investments of more than Rs 1 lakh crore during the summit, which is from 25-28 September here. Paswan said the agreements worth Rs 65,000 crore were signed on Thursday with two big corporates - Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL) and three Coca-Cola bottlers.

The event kick-started with Reliance Consumer Products Ltd signing a Rs 40,000-crore agreement with the Food Processing Industries Ministry to establish integrated food manufacturing facilities in India.

Under the MoU, RCPL will invest more than Rs 1,500 crore to set up integrated facilities for food products in Katol, Nagpur, in Maharashtra and Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh.

Reliance Industries had announced in August, saying it would create "Asia's largest integrated food parks with AI-driven automation, robotics, and sustainable technologies".

Separately, three Coca-Cola bottlers in India will jointly invest Rs 25,760 crore. SLMG Beverages, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (Coca-Cola's wholly-owned bottling arm), and Kandhari Group of Companies have committed to investmenting in nine states, including Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. *— PTI*

THOMAS COOK & BLINKIT TIE UP FOR FOREX CARDS

MUMBAI, 25 SEPT

Thomas Cook (India), a leading omnichannel travel and foreign exchange services provider, has partnered with quick commerce platform Blinkit to offer its 'Borderless Multicurrency' prepaid forex cards to customers within minutes. The service is currently available in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai, with plans for a phased rollout across other major source markets in India.

Deepesh Varma, Executive Vice President – Foreign Exchange at Thomas Cook India, said the collaboration reflects the company's commitment to anticipating evolving consumer behavior and delivering innovative, industry-first solutions.

The company's forex team will manage all processing in line with statutory guidelines, completing the procedure within an hour. Blinkit will handle doorstep delivery of the blank cards, while Thomas Cook India will manage secure V-KYC verification and card activation. *—PTI*

RBI sets stricter norms for digital payment security

MUMBAI, 25 SEPT

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued comprehensive new guidelines to enhance the security of digital payment transactions, introducing a risk-based, multi-factor authentication framework.

These rules, outlined in the Authentication Mechanisms for Digital Payment Transactions Directions, 2025, will come into effect on 1 April, 2026.

The directions apply to all payment system providers and participants, and cover all domestic digital payment transactions. Specific provisions address cross-border card-not-present transactions, requiring issuers to implement enhanced validation measures by 1 October, 2026, for international card use where the card is not physically present.

Most digital transactions rely on SMS-based OTPs as a second layer of security. The RBI's new norms mandate at least two distinct factors of authentication, one of which must be dynamic, unique to each transaction, to counter rising cyber threats.

In case of non-compliance, issuers will bear responsibility for compensating customers. The guidelines are aligned with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. *—ANI*

CMF IN FOCUS

Nothing to invest $100 M in India, create 1,800 jobs

LONDON, 25 SEPT

Nothing CEO Carl Pei has announced a major expansion in India, committing to invest over USD 100 million and create more than 1,800 jobs over the next three years. The investment includes a new manufacturing joint venture with Optiemus, one of India's leading technology manufacturers.

Pei revealed the plans following a meeting with Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, a proponent of India's 'Make in India' initiative. He stated, "There is no doubt; India will play a key role in shaping the future of the global smartphone industry."

Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw with Nothing CEO Carl Pei ***PHOTO: X/ CarlPei***

As part of the strategy, Nothing intends to establish its sub-brand, CMF, as a subsidiary headquartered in India. The goal is to build it into the country's first truly global consumer technology brand. Pei emphasised the vision: "Built from India, to the world." *—Agencies*

Carl Pei: The brain behind Nothing

Carl Pei, 34, is the co-founder and CEO of Nothing, a UK-based consumer tech firm known for its bold design and transparent devices. Previously co-founder of OnePlus, Pei built its global presence before launching Nothing in 2021. Born in China, raised in Sweden and the US, Pei began his entrepreneurial journey as a teenager. A self-taught techie, he built websites and sold electronics before joining smartphone maker Meizu, and later Oppo. With a hands-on approach, candid online presence, and passion for product innovation, Pei now leads one of the most talked-about tech startups of this decade.

PHOTO: PTI

Lisa appointed as head coach of women's MI team

MUMBAI, 25 SEPT

Mumbai Indians on Thursday appointed former Australia cricketer and two-time World Cup winner Lisa Keightley as the head coach of their women's team. Keightley, part of Australia's World Cup-winning squads in 1997 and 2005, is one of the most respected coaches in the women's game. Her coaching resume spans Australia, England, and top global leagues. MI women are already the most successful team in the history of the Women's Premier League (WPL), winning two titles in just three seasons, the inaugural edition in 2023 and again in 2025. "We are thrilled to welcome Lisa Keightley to the Mumbai Indians family. A trailblazer in women's cricket, Lisa has inspired generations with her passion, expertise, and pioneering spirit.—*PTI*

Jr Women's Hockey WC: India looks to polish grey areas

CANBERRA, 25 SEPT

The Indian junior women's hockey team will look to fine-tune the grey areas ahead of the upcoming FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup when it kicks off its five-match tour of Australia starting here on Friday. India will play five matches at the National Hockey Center in Canberra from 26 September to 2 October.The squad will play the first three fixtures against the Australia junior women's team on 26, 27, and 29 September, followed by two matches against Canberra Chill, a club which plays in Australia's Hockey One League, on 30 September and 2 October.—*PTI*

Palmeiras rallies to defeat River Plate 3-1

SAO PAULO, 25 SEPT

Vitor Roque scored early in the second half and Jose Manuel Lopez added two late goals Wednesday as Brazil's Palmeiras rallied to defeat Argentina's River Plate 3-1 and progress to the Copa Libertadores semifinals. Striker Maximiliano Salas put the visitors ahead in the eighth minute, but Roque tied it in the 51st minute with his second goal of the series. "Flaco" Lopez converted a penalty kick in the 90th minute and added a goal in the 94th. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

AIFF to resolve player release issue: Jamil

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

Indian men's team head coach Khalid Jamil on Thursday urged the clubs and the All India Football Federation to find a solution that "balances club and national commitments" through "constructive dialogue" after 14 players from three Indian Super League sides delayed joining the national camp. Jamil had named 30 probables for the preparatory camp ahead of India's crucial Asian Cup qualifying round matches against Singapore on October 9 (away) and October 14 (home). But 14 players, including Bengaluru FC skipper Sunil Chhetri, are yet to be released by their clubs, while one player is unavailable due to illness. Three players Brandon Fernandes, Asheer Akhtar, and Farukh Choudhary -- have been added, bringing the current group to 18. They have been training in Bengaluru since September 20. Jamil admitted that not having enough players, especially in defence, has affected team training.—*PTI*

Shreyas takes six-month break from red-ball cricket

Shreyas Iyer was on Thursday appointed India A captain *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

Shreyas Iyer was on Thursday appointed India A captain for a three-match one-day series against Australia A in Kanpur from 30 September, but he has taken a six-month break from red-ball cricket to strengthen his dodgy back.

Besides Iyer, who recently informed the BCCI's chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar that he cannot take the rigors of red-ball cricket owing to a stiff back, the other key players in the India A one-day squad are Ravi Bishnoi, wicketkeeper-batter Prabhsimran Singh, big-hitting all-rounder Riyan Parag, and Ayush Badoni, among others.

Top-order batter Abhishek Sharma, who has been India's stand-out batter in the ongoing Asia Cup, middle-order batter Tilak Varma, and pacers Harshit Rana and Arshdeep Singh will all join the side for the second and third matches on 3 and 5 October Agarkar, while announcing the India squad for the two-Test home series against the West Indies in Dubai, said that while no discussion had been held on who will lead the ODI side against Australia, the India A series will give Iyer another opportunity to showcase his leadership skills. "Shreyas Iyer, we want him to play and play well. It's not that he hasn't led India A earlier. He has led his franchise well, and India A obviously helps us look at leaders. But we haven't discussed anything about the Australia ODIs (in October)," said Agarkar. Iyer had conveyed his decision to step away from red-ball cricket to the BCCI. "Mr Shreyas Iyer has informed the BCCI of his decision to take a six-month break from red-ball cricket," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a statement confirming the development that was reported a couple of days ago. —*PTI*

WI series: Ravindra Jadeja named India vice-captain

Nair and Easwaran dropped; Bumrah named in India squad

DUBAI, 25 SEPT

Veteran spin-bowling all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has been named vice-captain of the Indian Test squad for the upcoming two-match home series against West Indies, his first time in the role in this format, though he has previously served as deputy in ODIs and T20Is.

Shubman Gill will continue as captain in what will be his second Test series in charge, following his debut stint in England earlier this year. Rishabh Pant, who was the vice-captain during the England tour before fracturing his foot during the fourth Test, has not recovered in time and remains at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru.

Star India pacer Jasprit Bumrah was on Thursday named in India's Test squad for the home series against the West Indies, while Devdutt Padikkal replaced an out-of-form Karun Nair in the side.

Bumrah, who had played only three out of five Tests in England due to workload management, had made himself available for the two-match West Indies series starting in Ahmedabad on 2 October. While announcing the 15-member squad at the Indian team hotel here, Chairman of Selectors Ajit Agarkar dropped elaborate hints that Nair and Bengal opener Abhimanyu Easwaran are no longer in the scheme of things. "Bumrah is ready and keen to play both Tests against West Indies," Chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar said here. "We want the best for Bumrah, but the team always comes first. We have to be careful with big tournaments around," he added. —*PTI*

INDIA SQUAD

■ Shubman Gill (C), ■Yashasvi Jaiswal, ■KL Rahul, ■Sai Sudharsan, ■Devdutt Padikkal, ■Dhruv Jurel (WK), ■Ravindra Jadeja (VC), ■Washington Sundar, ■Jasprit Bumrah, ■Axar Patel, ■Nitish Kumar Reddy, ■N Jagadeesan (WK), ■Mohammed Siraj, ■Prasidh Krishna, ■Kuldeep Yadav.

Jadeja *PHOTO: PTI* | Padikkal *PHOTO: PTI* | Bumrah *PHOTO: PTI*

INDIA QUALIFIES FOR FINAL

Last chance for India to check out Jitesh as 'finisher'

DUBAI, 25 SEPT

Sanju Samson, being an apparent middle-order misfit, will certainly worry head coach Gautam Gambhir, and the Indian team management might be tempted to check out Jitesh Sharma during their inconsequential final Super 4 encounter against Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup here on Friday.

Once India won against Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, which had lost both its Super 4 encounters against Bangladesh and Pakistan, was ousted from the competition and will be taking the field to complete formalities.

The stage now seems set for a possible India-Pakistan showdown in the final on Sunday. Apart from Samson, who is not fitting into the puzzle called the Indian batting order, the only other worry at the moment could be missing 10 catches so far in the tournament, including five against Bangladesh en route to the final. Saif Hassan's 69 runs went in vain as Indian spinners led by Kuldeep Yadav (3/18) ran through the Bangladesh lineup, helping India qualify for the Asia Cup final on September 28.

Varun Chakravarthy and Jasprit Bumrah also took 2 wickets apiece as Bangladesh's chances of qualifying for the final hang by a thread, depending on their result vs Pakistan.

Earlier, Abhishek Sharma's blistering 75 was the only shining light in India's innings as the Men in Blue lost wickets at regular intervals to post 168/6 against Bangladesh on Wednesday. —*PTI*

India vs Sri Lanka
Match starts at
8.00 pm IST

DP WORLD ASIA CUP 2025

Ashwin becomes first Indian star to play in BBL

SYDNEY, 25 SEPT

R Ashwin on Thursday became the first major Indian cricketer to join the Big Bash League by signing up with Sydney Thunder.

Ashwin recently announced his retirement from the Indian Premier League, making him eligible to play in leagues around the world. The champion off-spinner had said goodbye to international cricket in the middle of the Australia tour last year.

The 39-year-old will be available for the second half of the BBL, scheduled from December 14 to January 25.

"Thunder were crystal clear about how they'd use me and brave enough to back it. My conversations with the leadership were excellent, and we're fully aligned on my role," Ashwin was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au. "I love how Dave Warner plays the game, and it's always better when your leader shares your mindset. I can't wait to perform for the Thunder Nation."

Thunder general manager Trent Copeland called it the biggest signing in BBL history. "I think it's arguably the biggest signing in BBL history – first Indian legend and an icon of the game," Copeland said. "He's a very competitive guy, but one of the most impressive things has been that before I even mentioned a thing about our club, he said, 'I loved what Sam Billings did for you guys last year as the overseas player. —*PTI*

JAPAN OPEN 2025

Alcaraz beats Baez 6-4

TOKYO, 25 SEPT

World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz survived a mid-match injury scare and a rain delay to take down Argentine Sebastian Baez 6-4. Alcaraz dropped to the floor, holding his left ankle and heel, as he stretched for a forehand in the fifth game of the first set.

The 22-year-old Spaniard continued after receiving treatment and strapping. Later, he was interrupted while serving for the set due to a 30-minute

relay delay., "I was scared too, I'm not gonna lie, " Alcaraz said. "When I planted the ankle, I was worried, because it didn't feel good at the beginning. I'm just happy that I was able to play good tennis after that and finish the match quite well. I will try to recover to do whatever it takes to be ready for the next round.", 6-2 on his debut at the Japan Open in Tokyo on Thursday. Second-seeded American Taylor Fritz survived a tough opener against Canada's Gabriel Diallo to go through 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(3) while third-seeded Dane Holger Rune beat Serbian Hamad Medjedovic 7-6(7), 6-1. —*PTI*

WPA C'ships sees colourful opening

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

India showcased its cultural diversity during a colourful opening ceremony to mark the inauguration of the 12th edition of World Para Athletics Championships, the largest ever in history, here on Thursday.

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Saturday declared open the championships, which will see around 2,200 para athletes from 104 countries competing over the next nine days."I declare World Para Athletics 2025 open," Mandaviya said at the end of the ceremony that lasted around one hour and 45 minutes.India is the fourth Asian nation after Qatar (2015), UAE (2019) and Japan (2024) to host the world para athletics championships.

The inauguration was preceded by the athletes' parade and a 45-minute cultural performance. —*PTI*

Blow for India as Arundhati gets injured

BENGALURU, 25 SEPT

India were dealt a blow ahead of the Women's World Cup as fast bowler Arundhati Reddy suffered an injury during the warm-up match against England here on Thursday.

The pacer, who had earlier dismissed England opener Amy Jones, attempted a return catch off Heather Knight in the 13th over but landed awkwardly on her left leg before collapsing to the ground.

Doctors rushed in to attend to Reddy and initially tried to help her walk off the field before a wheelchair was brought in for the bowler.

The ICC said that "clarity is awaited" on Reddy's participation in the World Cup after the freak accident in her follow-through. The Indian team is hoping that Reddy's injury is not serious, as she is a vital cog in the side's pace bowling department. —*PTI*

ICC HEARING: SURYA KUMAR TOLD TO REFRAIN FROM MAKING POLITICAL STATEMENTS

DUBAI, 25 SEPT

Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav was on Thursday told to refrain from making any comments that could be construed as political in nature by the ICC match referee Richie Richardson during an official hearing of the global body on a complaint filed by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

The hearing against Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan and Haris Rauf, on a complaint filed by the BCCI, will be held on Friday as the two are playing in their Asia Cup match against Sri Lanka on Thursday.

It is understood that the PCB had filed the complaint within the stipulated seven-day period after the September 14 game between India and Pakistan in which Suryakumar had refused to shake hands and then dedicated the victory to the Indian armed forces for carrying out Operation Sindoor in May. He had also expressed solidarity with the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack.

"Surya attended the ICC hearing today. He was accompanied by BCCI's COO and Cricket Operations Manager. Richardson explained to him that he shouldn't be making any comments that could be seen as political in nature.

The sanction can't be ascertained. Since it falls under Level 1, it could either be a warning or a financial penalty of 15 percent deductions in match fees," a tournament source privy to the details told PTI on conditions of anonymity. —*PTI*

Suryakumar Yadav *PHOTO: PTI*

'WE HAD TO EVOLVE'

Game is too fast now to rely on one style: Satwik

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPT

India's top men's doubles shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have attributed their resurgence to evolving their game and working on developing service variations in the last 16 months said on Thursday.

The former world No.1 pair has come up with some breathtaking performances in recent times after being sidelined by injuries and illness in the last year and a half. The duo recently won the bronze medal at the World Championships in Paris and followed up the sterling performance by reaching the Hong Kong Super 500 and China Masters Super 750 tournament finals.

Satwiksairaj and Chirag *PHOTO: PTI*

On a hot streak, the nine-time BWF World Tour winners, who are currently placed No.7 in the world, are hoping to add a 10th title to their kitty soon, and also credit their string of good performances to a "side-by-side" strategy they have evolved in recent times.

"We have tried playing side-by-side more often, especially after service to control the pushes," Chirag, who relied more on the front-and-back strategy so far, told PTI Videos.

"(Malaysian) coach Tan Kim Her told us that many pairs are doing it, and we too felt it (side-by-side strategy) worked well.

Once a guy serves, the other splits up at the front court to catch the pushes. It has really worked for us in the last two to three tournaments," added Chirag.

The duo has also worked on service variations, with Chirag developing a flat serve that has become his key weapon. —*PTI*

Isak could make first PL start for Liverpool

MANCHESTER, 25 SEPT

Alexander Isak could make his first Premier League start for Liverpool against Crystal Palace on Saturday.

Liverpool coach Arne Slot has been easing the Sweden striker into the action since he completed a British record $170 million deadline day transfer to Anfield. Until then, Isak had a disrupted offseason. The suspension of Hugo Ekitike, who was red-carded for taking his shirt off during a goal celebration against Southampton on Tuesday, means Isak could be called upon at Selhurst Park.

The forward has already started games in the Champions League and English League Cup, where he scored his first goal for Liverpool on Tuesday. Isak has yet to be given 90 minutes for Liverpool and was taken off at halftime midweek.

Slot said he does not expect Isak to be up to full match sharpness until after the international break next month. Federico Chiesa is another option in place of Ekitike after the Italian impressed with two assists against Southampton. —*PTI*

Alexander Isak *PHOTO: X/@ISAK*